

**A COMPARISON OF THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON THE  
POSSIBLE SELVES OF GREEK AND ENGLISH YOUNG ADULTS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Research suggests that parental divorce affects important aspects of offspring's later life, especially their own marital life/personal life. These effects may be mediated by a range of factors. Earlier research has suggested possible selves as such mediating factors in the self-reported problems of adolescent divorcees' offspring. The present study explores the long-term effects of parental divorce taking account of societal and gender differences, on the possible selves reported by UK and Greek young adults in relation to future family life, occupational life, friendships and leisure. Exploratory interviews were carried out with young adults, from divorced and intact families. Individuals from divorced families reported more negative possible selves than their counterparts from intact families. Gender differences were indicated in the majority of life domains especially family and leisure. Questionnaires concerning the divorce scenario and possible selves were devised from the information derived from the interviews and completed by a sample of 329 Greek and English young adults. A mediating role for social factors in the possible selves reported by individuals who experienced parental divorce is suggested. The study indicated that nationality rather than the status of parental family differentiated to a great extent individuals' possible selves. Greek and UK divorcees' offspring differed in the possible selves concerning relationships with friends and colleagues with the English being more oriented to friends and colleagues than individuals from intact families. The style of living and dominant representations of selves of Greek and English individuals led divorcees' offspring to focus on a particular reference group when they experienced negative divorce circumstances. This was friends and occupation for Greek and UK individuals respectively. The study indicated few gender differences. Education also appeared to be a mediating factor. The findings are considered in terms of cross-cultural differences in attitudes towards divorce and the implications for educational programmes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Within the past two decades, as a result of the increase in marital breakdown, researchers have become increasingly interested in the effects of divorce on children. Of many research efforts to date, only a fraction have addressed the critical question of the long-term effects, although this is a central question for parents, clinicians, and society as a whole. Understanding the long-term effects of divorce may ultimately influence parental decisions about the way divorce is approached, shape effective models of intervention and inform social policy. Research relating to early adulthood would seem particularly important as it is at this time that young people are developing relationships themselves. This is stressed by Glenn and Kramer (1987 p.824): "... the greatest need now is for in-depth studies, preferable longitudinal, of the children of divorce during early and middle adulthood...".

Most studies have focused on the short-term effects of divorce and have been concerned with the effects of the process of divorce and the immediate consequences (Hetherington and Arasteh, 1988). Those concerned with the long-term effects have tended to be longitudinal (e.g. Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980) and in most cases have not extended to young adulthood or later adult life (Hetherington et. al., 1978; Hetherington, 1989). Those studies which have focused on young adult divorcees' offspring e.g. Kalter (1977) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) suggest that parental divorce has deleterious effects on children's personality extending into adulthood and affects important aspects of later life. For instance, there is the so called 'sleepers effect' in young women from divorced families where they enter into short-lived sexual relationships and are engaged in dating and sexual intercourse earlier (Hetherington and Parke, 1987); while young men are likely to avoid relationships, or throw themselves into short-lived relationships (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). There is also evidence of intergenerational transmission of marital instability (Pope and Mueller, 1976; Mueller and Pope, 1977; Wallerstein, 1991); lower commitment to marriage and a tendency for females especially to get married at an early age (Gleen and Kramer, 1987).

Similar findings have also been obtained from studies focusing on college populations, where the attitudes to marriage and behaviours of young adults from divorced families have been compared to those from students from intact families (Billingham et al., 1989; Fine et al., 1983,



1986; Southworth and Schwarz, 1987; Gabardi and Rosen, 1992). Research has also considered the psychological well-being of children of divorced parents when they are young adults in terms of happiness, self-ratings of health and self-satisfaction in a range of life domains, e.g. family and friendships (Gleen and Kramer, 1985, 1987), their expectations towards marriage and marital happiness (Franklin et al, 1990; Stone and Hutchinson, 1992; Marlar and Jacobs, 1992) and intimate relationships (Gabardi and Rosen, 1992; Bolgar et al, 1995). In addition, the effects of parental divorce on young adults' offspring's self-concept and self-esteem have been explored by a range of studies (Wallerstein and Blakslee, 1989; Holdnack, 1992).

Although we know a considerable amount about the effects of divorce we know relatively little about the mediating processes that lead to these outcomes and whether they are consistent across all divorce situations. What factors might mediate between divorce circumstances and the effects on the offspring of divorcees? Such factors might include the individuals' personality, self-concept, self-esteem, gender, the social environment in which they live, and the support they receive from significant others in their lives.

The need for illuminating the mediating cognitive factors between the parental family situation and the patterns of behaviour adopted by individuals from divorced families is clear. This might be achieved by the exploration of the life stories of divorcees' offspring; or through a longitudinal study focusing on the pattern of relationships and occupational life divorcees' offspring want to have and what they actually have; or through a psychoanalytic approach concentrating on the reframing and elaboration of individual's feelings in the relationships in which they get involved connected with their experience of parental divorce. A further approach might be to study the quality (positive or negative) of representations of future selves, regarding occupational life, social life and family, examining the differences between individuals from divorced and intact families. This might illuminate our understanding of what has been described as the "intergenerational transmission of marital instability" (Wallerstein, 1991), i.e. that children of divorced parents are more likely to divorce during their own adulthood than children raised in intact families (Glenn and Shelton, 1983; Kulka and Weingarten, 1979; Mueller and Pope, 1977; Pope and Mueller, 1976). It may also enable the exploration of networks of 'anticipatory identities' of divorcees' offspring. Although demographic data cannot alone describe the



mediating processes or causal links between divorce circumstances and their effects, knowledge of how individuals who grow up in divorced families resemble or differ from their counterparts raised in intact families can provide a useful perspective for the broad examination of long-term effects.

Within the framework of "possible selves" (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989) the current study explores links between different divorce scenarios and the various aspects of "me" which dominate the "working self-concept", facilitating the individual's understanding of the connections between feelings and actions. If links can be identified it may be possible to intervene and to assist the individual in promoting positive possible selves where negative possible selves dominate. It may also be possible to identify divorce situations which are related to particular aspects of children's anticipatory self-identities. This might enable parents to avoid aspects of divorce which are connected with specific negative future selves of their off-spring.

The major conceptual perspectives that earlier studies that have focused on this issue have adopted are the stress-coping -vulnerability model (Hetherington, 1989; Hetherington et al, 1978) and the psychoanalytic clinical perspective employed by Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1991; Kalter, 1987; Kalter et. al., 1989). These perspectives are essentially oriented towards the clinical. Although the importance of the psychoanalytic approach and the validity of the assessment and interpretation of the problems emerging from a divorce situation are not challenged by the current research, the lack of a cognitive-oriented perspective in attempting to understand these issues is apparent. For example: Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989), in exploring the coping processes people adopt to adjust to parental divorce, consider that the child's final task is to achieve realistic hopes about his/her own future relationships. The children of divorcees need to return to and rework their experience in the light of their increased understanding. The present study may offer a positive way forward in that it is possible for individuals to gain control over their possible selves, since to some extent they are maintained through conscious processes. Consequently, by manipulating possible selves individuals may gain control and influence over the effects that stressful life events have on their life. It is suggested that individuals are led to certain situations not only by drives and emotions not fully under their control but also through the information processing that they employ. The 'possible selves' framework adopted in this

study highlights the importance of cognitive processes and schemata by which individuals devise and pursue their future behaviour.

It is suggested that the concept of possible selves, may illuminate the processes mediating between the divorce scenario and the effects of divorce on young adults. The significance of possible selves is related to their function as incentives for future behaviour and to their ability to provide an evaluative and interpretative context for the current view of self (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 955). The single study focusing on divorce which employs the possible selves framework considers the effects of divorce on the nature of adolescent possible future selves, marital expectations and self-reported problems (Castron, Madison, Santrock, 1987). It does not focus on friendships, occupational relationships and work orientation-determination or on leisure. The most striking differences between adolescents from divorced and intact families found in this study related to differences in correlations between possible selves relating to expectation variables and problem variables. Self-reported problems were more closely linked to possible future selves and marital expectations in adolescents from divorced than intact families. These results appear to support the hypothesis that possible selves can serve to mediate the effects of stressful life events.

Few studies to date (Glenn and Shelton, 1983; Glenn and Kramer, 1985, 1987) have studied the friendship experiences of young adult divorcees' offspring and none have considered relationships at work. The study assumes that friends and colleagues in adult years might play a supplementary role to parental and family relationships. The exploration of future selves regarding leisure falls within the scope of the same theoretical approach. The exploration of possible selves in relation to an individual's friendships, future occupational life and leisure falls within the scope of the interactionist perspective. Vondracek, Lerner, and Schulenberg (1983) described dynamic interaction as incorporating "a recognition of the fact that complex multidirectional relations exist between an individual and his/her context, and that changes in one of the multiple sources of development will influence changes in all others (p.187)". Pursuing this line of thought the relationships between family situation, career and friendships could be usefully studied from a long-term perspective. Papini (1994, p.54) reported that the affective quality of the family context influences the adolescent's sense of trust and security, thereby

influencing his/her willingness to explore and make commitments to various life alternatives.

Finally, research on the long-term effects of divorce has not addressed cultural differences. Findings emerging from research have been treated as universal phenomena whose effects will be consistent across culture. This may not be the case. Cultural perceptions of divorce may mediate the effects on individuals. For instance Greek and UK societies differ in the extent to which divorce is established and perceived as commonplace. The dominant way of living which is related to the extent of industrialisation and the individualised approach to life also differs between each society. Education as a major component in terms of the value set on it in Greek culture (Tsoukalas, 1977) may also act as a mediating factor. In these terms, the evolution of self in each society/culture is suggested as mediating the effects of parental divorce on the representations of selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding relationships with significant others in support groups, personal relationships and marital life.

The research described here will address issues relating to the relationships between possible selves (concerning family, occupation, friendships and leisure) and divorce circumstances and also the effects of gender, educational level and individuals' marital status on the nature of possible selves. The findings may illuminate the social structures, functions and values which inhibit or facilitate people from different cultures in coping with parental divorce.

The study aims (a) to identify the role of cultural/social factors as mediating factors in the effects of representations of selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding future personal relationships and family life, occupational life, friendships and leisure, (b) to focus on young adults who are at a stage in their life where they have established a degree of independence from their parents and are taking responsibility for their futures (c ) to consider gender differences, the role of the educational level of individuals, their marital status and also their father's educational level on possible selves (d) to identify the divorce circumstances affecting possible selves concerning family life and relationships, friendships, occupational life and leisure.

In an attempt to understand the role of the family in Greece and the UK and the social attitudes



and perceptions of family and divorce in each society, the first chapter will present earlier sociological-psychological studies focusing on family, its functions and role in both Greece and UK. The considerably lower level of divorce in Greece compared with that in the UK which is described by Eurostats and the media, as the country with the highest rate of divorce in the EU, made such a comparison attractive as it enables the exploration of the role of social and cultural factors in the development of possible selves. In the second chapter, the recent literature concerning the long-term effects of parental divorce on offspring's personality, well-being, self-concept and relevant mediating factors explored in previous studies will be presented. The third chapter will describe the theory of possible selves, its contribution to the conceptualisation of the self-concept, self-esteem and motivation, its relation to self-schemata and the mediating role of the social context in the development of possible selves. Although the theory of possible selves is concerned with motivation, it is beyond the scope of the present study to explore whether possible selves influence future actions. The theoretical framework of possible selves is adopted to explore the nature of the particular possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring from different countries, Greece and the UK, where society sets different values on family life and divorce.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS RELATED TO THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN GREECE AND UK.**

Recently there have been considerable changes in family life. Eurostats (1995) reports that the proportion of first marriages fell from 91% of the EU total in 1960 to 84% in the 1990s. In the EU over the period 1960-1992, the number of divorces almost quadrupled from 170.000 to 607.000. Frude in 1993 (p.283) reported that an estimated third of all marriages that take place in the UK will end in divorce. This was especially the case in Britain after the Divorce Reform Act, which brought about profound changes in the law regarding the simplification of the process of divorce (these changes came into effect in January 1971) (Michel, 1993, p. 186, 187). The rates of divorce in Wales and England quadrupled in the years between 1960 (6.7%) and 1972 (28.6%). In Greece, the rate of divorce increased in 1980, much later than in England, while the reform of the divorce law took place in late 1983. In Greece, the rate of divorce has increased by about 50% in the last ten years (Eizenberg, 1994). The figure was 0.4 for 1,000 inhabitants in 1975 while from 1980 onwards it was between 0.6 to 0.8 per 1,000 inhabitants (Eurostats, 1996). There are more divorced women than divorced men, because of women's unwillingness to enter a new married life (Mousourou, 1993, p. 292).

Nowadays, although the rates of divorce are increasing, there is no decline in the popularity of marriage. Giddens (1993, p.400) reports that in the UK three quarters of those divorced remarried. As more people end their marriages, the role of the 'divorcee' and the process of becoming divorced are seen as less aberrant and less 'shameful', so that individuals contemplating divorce are less likely to be inhibited by the thought that if their marriage ends they will be socially stigmatized (Frude, 1993, p. 285; Giddens, 1993). Some authors have suggested that the increasing rate of divorce in western countries reflects the rise of individualism, which has a long history in western culture. It is implied that people constantly monitor whether they are getting the best out of life, and that when they feel their marital situation is less than optimal they seek change (Frude, 1993, p.285).

Industrialization which contributes to the individualist way of living and weakens the traditional



system of family control and consequently its role as a major social institution is reported by many researchers (Van de Kaa, 1987). Work positions in the market economy offer the possibility of making a living as an individual, not as a member of a family. This enables individuals to become independent of their kin or elders (Goode, 1982, p. 180). Marriage today no longer has much connection with the desire to perpetuate property and status from generation to generation and it is not the necessary economic partnership that it used to be. From this perspective marriage is evaluated on the basis of the personal satisfaction it offers (Giddens, 1993, p.405). Mousourou (1989, p.23) reports that families are expected to provide an emotional and affectional umbrella for their members particularly since individuals are becoming increasingly involved in occupational life and there has been a separation of the home from the workplace. Sometimes these high demands on the family cannot be met by its members. Rising rates of divorce do not seem to indicate a deep dissatisfaction with marriage as such, but an increased determination to make it a rewarding and satisfying relationship (Giddens, 1993, p.397).

The high rate of divorce is also related to changes in women's roles and status emerging from their increased *workforce participation*, although they still seem to be responsible for the majority of the household chores and child bearing (Michel, 1993, p. 242), and the rise of feminist philosophy and decomplementarity (Burns, 1994, pp.167-169) indicating that the interests of men and women are less interdependent in modern societies (Harris, 1980, Burns, 1995, p.169). Burns points out that decomplementarity creates the context for more individual rather than family-constrained choices. This, in turn, brings more rationalist evaluations of relationships and more terminations of unsatisfactory ones (Burns, 1995, pp.167-169). Kataki (1984, p. 142) analysing young Greek married women's perception of themselves in the future, reports that they did not perceive themselves being with their husbands in the future. In their drawings they presented themselves as following a different path from that of their husbands who were presented as being absent in the majority of the cases.

Child rearing arrangements between parents and workforce participation of both spouses is reported in the relevant literature as a factor influencing the role of the family in modern societies. Harris (1983, p. 217) reports that the length of the post-rearing and post-parental phases of contemporary marriage means that spouses will not be occupied with child rearing for the majority

of their married life. Child raising is arranged between them, therefore, both spouses require an occupation in addition to domestic work where they are likely to develop different networks of acquaintances with different norms and values and are also subject to different rates of occupational mobility. Moreover, the longer both are in paid work, the greater are the chances for the spouses becoming differentiated and the greater the differentiation is likely to be. The result of social differentiation may be to erode the shared values, attitudes and expectations upon which the marriage is based and increase the chances of its breakdown. Demographic changes, by changing the shape of the family, may therefore significantly affect the level of marital breakdown and dissolution over longer marriage durations.

Illuminating the increasing percentage of divorce one has to take into account that an individuals' attitude towards marriage is affected by their socioeconomic status and gender. In England the rate of divorce was higher in the lower socioeconomic strata (Gibson, 1971). Nowadays, socioeconomic factors relating to rates of divorce are almost eliminated although the gender variable still remains one of most importance. According to Michel, (1993, p. 190), in the 1980s the percentage of women who sued for divorce was higher than that of men; in England 60% of the divorces were initiated by women.

Understanding of the rates of divorce in English and Greek societies is facilitated by exploration of the current role of the family in each society and its contribution to the individuals' way of living. A brief account of the role of the family and the social value set on it in British and Greek societies respectively is given below.

### **Britain**

Giddens (1993, p. 400) describing the nature of family and marriage in the UK refers to affective individualism as the major influence on marriage. Couples are expected to develop mutual affection, based on personal attraction and compatibility, as a basis for contracting marriage relationships. The emphasis on personal satisfaction in marriage has raised expectations which sometimes cannot be met, (this is one factor involved in increasing rates of divorce). The British family has now been described as one of serial monogamy. A high percentage of people who divorce remarry. Giddens also points out that a high proportion of Britons engage in sexual

relations with individuals other than their spouses (Giddens 1993, p. 400). Rapoport and Rapoport (1982, p. 476) report that 'families in Britain today are in transition from coping in a society in which there was a single overriding norm of what family life should be like to a society in which a range of norms are recognised as legitimate and, indeed desirable'.

Regarding the role of children in family life, Nissel (1982, p. 103) reports that given the restricted role of the family in individuals' lives, children are quick to sense that the family is no longer the powerful provider, educator and refuge it once was and, though temporarily they depend on it, they are soon able to shake it off. Nissel also suggests that the changed attitude of children, in turn, affects the way parents think about the family. More of them find their children unmanageable, escape into employment, careers and a different marriage.

Concerning the effects of the strains and gains of 'dual working' and employment on the marital relationship, they are more likely to be positive if the wife's job is one she enjoys, if the husband's attitude is actively supportive and if both partners are highly educated (Gowler and Legge, 1982, p.152). Bailyn's study (1971) of a series of British couples with higher educational levels indicates that a lower level of marital satisfaction is associated with one sub-type of the dual career pattern where the 'integrated' wife (who tries to integrate a career with family life) is married to a highly career-oriented husband.

Alternatives to traditional nuclear family life include cohabitation, gay/ lesbian parent families and staying single. In Britain, being single is related to a concentration on work and the promotion of personal freedom and autonomy which is depicted in the demographic statistics by a high trend for later marriages- people now marry on average about three years later than was the case in 1960. The increase in the numbers of people living alone is influenced by the rising rate of divorce. Since 1975, single-parenting seems to be socially accepted and individuals in such families receive social benefits for each child (Giddens, 1993, p. 420).

## **Greece**

Modern sociologists have focused on the idiosyncrasy and distinctive nature of the Greek family in comparison to the European one. The Greek family seems to have characteristics which



distinguish it from the Western European family type due to its geographic position allowing influences from different cultures (Mousourou, 1984), and the delay of industrialisation (Michel, 1993). Mousourou (1984, p. 42) reports that the Greek family has been characterised as Mediterranean rather than Western European in the current sociology of family (Michel, 1993). This is related to the extent of urbanization and industrialization of the country (Michel, 1993, p. 238). The role of traditional family values in modern households is reflected in Eurostats (1995) where it is apparent that the divorce figure for Mediterranean countries (Greece, Italy, Spain) including Greece, are lower than 1 per 1000 inhabitants, while those for the countries of northern Europe, including the UK, are more than twice as high.

In contrast to the theories of social change describing the family in Western European countries the case of Greece is distinctive. The traditional agricultural family has been modified keeping its traditional structure (old and new generations live together with close bonds between children and parents). Consequently, the transfer from traditional to modern family life is not linear but complex since old and new elements of life often coexist (Maratou, 1990, p. 105). Mousourou (1990) suggests that the Greek family is an amalgam of traditional and modern values and ways of living due to the rapid urbanisation of the Greek population (due to internal immigration in '50s and '60s) which did not necessarily imply or contribute to the decline of close bonds between relatives. Also, traditional social and family functions and structures are not being replaced by new ones (Maratou, 1990, p. 105). Doumani (1989) reports that working class families living in Athens usually include grandparents and sometimes children who have grown up or lived or will live in nuclear urban families. This situation seems to create a clash of values and ideals. Katakis (1990) comparing traditional and modern Greek family systems suggests that there are three developmental stages (traditional agricultural family, nuclear family, contemporary families), which correspond to three types of family systems and three kind of identities. The information which emerged from individuals' self-referrals indicated that the three systems often coexist. Conflicting elements in these identities can cause malfunction in modern Greek families. The most interesting finding of this research is the clear aims and goals regarding family life reported by grandparents (socioeconomic survival of the family), and their children (economic and biological survival of the family), while grandchildren regard marriage as an opportunity to develop personal relationships and communication. Their perceptions of married life seem to lack

the solidity of traditional values and goals. Spouses seem to follow parallel paths which seldom lead to common goals. This may create future problems for the married couple (Haritos-Fatouros and Hatzigeleki, 1997).

Regarding women's employment and their role as mothers, the literature suggests that women's employment is related, in the majority of cases, to the availability of a family person, usually the grandmother (Kataki, 1984, p. 139), to take responsibility for the children (grandchildren). Women's employment seems to be related to the family, especially child rearing and well-being. The reason for mother's employment in the majority of the cases is related to the need to increase family income rather than their need to be independent and gain personal satisfaction (Mousourou, 1989, p. 90). This seems to be of secondary importance for them since being a good mother is the priority. However, this conflicts with perceptions of the modern woman's identity. However, these studies are not recent and women's status in modern Greek society is continuously changing, becoming closer to the Western European one. However, the distinction between 'own' people and 'others' which used to be prevalent in traditional families still has a place in the modern Greek family. This is depicted in the long-lasting tied bonds between children and their parents expressed in the practices mentioned above e.g. grandmothers having the day-care of grandchildren which allows parents to have a full-time job. Children are also expected to provide services for their parents when necessary. Contact with relatives during the time of significant events or celebrations and holidays also indicates close bonds between family members. It is also interesting that the majority of women in Doumani's study (1989), regarding the role of the mother in the Greek society, reported that when they experienced a serious life event they would ask their relatives, 'their own people', rather than their friends for support. This is defined by sociologists as family introversion. This tends to characterise the Greek family, since a large part of the individuals' everyday life and leisure time is spent with relatives (Mousourou, 1985, pp.26-27).

The traditional values of Greek society are reflected in the small number of people who live in alternative family structures to nuclear family life. Kongidou (1996, p.17) reports that even individuals working in support agencies, e.g. social services, are biased against alternative types of family structure. She also reports the attitude of the circle of relatives and acquaintances towards the role of women as good mothers available to their children, rather than breadwinners,



as one of the mediating factors for the low economic status of single-parents families in Greece (Kongidou, 1996, p.10). Homosexual couples are almost unknown, while it is only recently that the number of single-parent families has increased. The number of single mothers is almost the smallest among European countries (4.7%) especially compared with Ireland (7.9%) and the UK (6.6%) (Eurostats, 1993; Kongidou, 1995, p. 76). In Greece, although the number of single-parent homes has not been precisely estimated, relevant studies report that the number of single mothers is quite low although consistently increasing (1970: 1.1%, 1980: 1.4%) (Papadioti, 1995, p. 24).

### **Greece-Western European countries**

Regarding family functioning and the educational level of spouses, the literature indicates that in contrast to most European families, having children in the Greek family leads to the mothers' increased domination and a reduction of the father's authority at home. The mother's authority seems to increase with the children's age (Safilios-Rotchschild, 1972). Zarnari (1979) showed in her study of middle and low social class that Greek mothers maintained their authority over their children to a great extent. Also, Doumani (1989, p. 146) reported that middle class parents control and influence children's lives more than do parents of low or high social class. In contrast to most European countries, the more educated Greek husbands are, the more cooperative they are with their wives. However, in Western Europe, less authoritarian parents are those whose educational level is intermediate. The husbands' professional status is positively related to the couple's cooperation, and reduced husbands' authoritarian behaviour towards their wives (Mousourou, 1984, p.87, 89; Michel, 1993, p. 292). Greece is one of the most well-educated European societies in terms of the number of individuals who have studied for a higher degree (Tsoukalas, 1977, Kataki, 1984, p. 36).

Regarding the context in which individuals perceive themselves, Kataki (1984, p. 42, 43) reports differences between West European and Greek societies with regard to personal success and individual success. In Greece, freedom and independence are defined in terms of the social group of 'our people' with whom we share our lives, who are part of our lives (Triandis and Vasiliou, 1972) while self-actualization in Maslow's pyramid depicts the high value western societies set on personal success and meeting one's goals and plans.

The minor role of employment in women's life is a distinctive characteristic of the Greek family compared to the Western European one (Kongidou, 1996). Tsoukalas (1986) reports that the family is the main source of support in Greece when help is needed especially in the case of child-care and the care of individuals with special needs. As such it substitutes for the welfare state and state institutions which provide a variety of types of care (Kongidou, 1995, p. 380; Mousourou, 1989, p.28). The Greek family and kin compared to that of Western countries contribute significantly to each other's lives by being consistent sources of support (e.g. immigration and settlement of new families in foreign countries). The family in Greece seems to play a crucial social role.

The sources of support and the reference group for the traditional Greek family used to be the extended family while in urban nuclear families, it is the circle of friends and acquaintances which play this role, although family members still seem to be the most important sources of support. The difference between the patterns of groups of significant others is that in the first case our 'own' people, are part of our lives/ourselves and one cannot easily detach him/herself from them while friendships last according to their nature. When they become negative in nature, they are discontinued (Doumani, 1989, p.154). Friendships relate to individuality and not the survival of a group of individuals where interdependence is central to their relationships. Consequently, friendship dissolution does not imply any particular consequences for those involved in them, their aim is basically a social one (Doumani, 1989, p. 142). An individual's choice to have or not to have contact with a particular group of people either relatives or friends is one of the main characteristics of the modern individualistic way of living in Western societies. This is not the situation in modern Greek society because of its rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. This has meant that the residues of the traditional family life are transferred to the individual's modern nuclear family life leaving strong affectional bonds between family members.

To conclude, the rate of divorce in the U.K is higher than that in Greece. This can be illuminated and understood in terms of an individualistic way of living interpreted in the context of industrialization, urbanization, women's workforce participation and decomplementarity of men and women. Greece's late industrialization and rapid urbanization means that the traditional values of family life are extended and sometimes dominate urban nuclear families leading to

women's minor concern with their occupation. However, the lack of recent sociological and anthropological studies, regarding the individuals' perception of the roles of parent and spouse and the social value set on the family as an institution in modern Greece mean that these ideas should be interpreted with caution. Industrialization of British society goes back to the beginning of the century. This suggests British people's early familiarity with an individualistic way of living and the development of networks of support other than family, e.g. friendships, colleagues. Overall, marriage is still popular in both countries but societal values and individualistic ways of living seem to account for different rates of divorce suggesting different degrees of the individuals' involvement and commitment to the family and their investment in alternative groups and places of reference. However, mediating factors like social policy, the welfare state and the social acceptance of divorce, should be taken into account in order to understand the increased rate of divorce in the UK compared with that in Greece. It may be that the increasing rate of divorce in Greece, mimicking that of West European countries, possibly indicates the need to perceive divorce as a stage of evolution in family life.



### **EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE**

#### **Long-term effects of parental divorce on adult-offspring**

Most of the studies exploring the short-term effects of divorce on offspring have focused on adolescence and childhood (Hetherington and Arasteh, 1988). These studies concentrate on the effects of divorce on children in the period following the dissolution of parental marriage. Studies that focus on the long-term effects of divorce are usually longitudinal (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980) and in most cases do not extend to the adult or young adult years (Hetherington et al., 1978, 1989). These studies explore the effects of the divorce after the period of offspring's adjustment to it (particularly after the first two years). The majority of these studies focus on adolescents (Tasker, 1992). Few researchers have focused on the effects of divorce on young adults (e.g. Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Billingham et al., 1989).

Research regarding consequences of parental divorce on adult offspring mainly consider the high rates of disturbed behaviour and the negative effects on personal and occupational life. Amato and Keith (1991, p.40) report that divorce and its concomitant circumstances (loss of parental contact, economic hard-ship) and exposure to conflicts may increase the risk of certain problems particularly in late adolescence and early adulthood. Sociological studies have shown that people who experienced parental divorce as children when compared with individuals who grow up in continuously intact families, have lower educational attainment (McLanahan, 1985), earn less (Hill et al., 1987, cited in Amato and Keith, 1991), and are more likely to be dependent on welfare (McLanahan, 1988). They are also more likely to bear children out of wedlock (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988), get divorced (Gleen and Kramer, 1987), and be the head of a single parent family (McLanahan, 1988). Amato and Keith in their review, suggest that these problems for the adult children of divorcees, in turn, may be associated with decrements in psychological well-being (Amato, 1988; Gleen and Kramer, 1985). Nock (1988, p.957) also reports that children from single-parent families, who experienced parental separation early in their lives, have less success in school, and lower earnings (lower prestige occupations), and lower occupational prestige than children reared in intact, two-parent families. Southworth and Schwarz (1987) also reported that parental divorce was found to have long-term effects on female college

students' expectations about their futures in relation to men, work and marriage.

An explanation of these findings comes from the sociological theories of Parsons's (Parsons and Bales, 1955) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) regarding the role of the nuclear family in teaching children about hierarchical authority relations. Nock proposed that one of the reasons why children of one parent families achieve less as adults (lower education and occupational attainment) is that they lack exposure to hierarchical models of authority relations within their families. In single-parent families parent and child are drawn together more as peers, both struggling to keep the family going. Research findings suggest that the situation is similar in the case of step-fathers since in the majority of the cases they define themselves as 'friends' rather than as 'parents' of their step-children (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1984, p.117). The family tends to serve as the prototype of all authority relationships; basic stratification is on the basis of sex and age. It is suggested that by virtue of living in non hierarchical families, children from single parent households are handicapped in their ability to function in institutions that are fundamentally hierarchical, namely education, the economy and occupations (Nock, 1988, p.957).

Regarding divorcees' offspring's behavioural problems and occupational life, Wadsworth et al (1990, p. 104) reviewed the findings of a follow up of a long-term study in the UK (National Survey of Health and Development) regarding children's (5362 individuals took part in the study) development and its association with their adult physical and mental health. The research reported higher rates of disturbed behaviour among those who had experienced parental divorce or separation as children. Delinquency by the age of 21 years was significantly higher among both sexes when parents had split up, particularly if the divorce happened in the first five years of their lives. Also parental separation was a risk to educational attainment which carried with it the associated risk to socioeconomic achievement in adulthood. As a consequence of this, men had lower earnings in their thirties and were more likely than others to be unemployed at the age of 18 and 36 (the time of the last follow-up). Women had a significantly lower chance of jobs in the highest occupational categories compared with their counterparts from intact families.

Studies considering divorcees' offspring's self-esteem indicate that they report low scores on this dimension of self-concept (Wallerstein and Blakeslee, 1989). Holdnack's (1992, p.137) work on



the self-concept of adult students from divorced families compared to that reported by their counterparts from intact families indicated that adults from divorced families perceived their family of origin as more disorganised than those from non-divorced families. There was a strong positive correlation between family of origin closeness and self-esteem scores which according to the research may interfere with their ability to establish and maintain intimate relationships. Satir (1972) suggests that the disruption of the marital bond during childhood and adolescence might produce feelings of worthlessness and lower self-esteem in offspring because of the emotional unavailability of a parent or parents following divorce. However, the findings are not consistent in the literature, since some studies indicated no differences between young adults (college students) from divorced and intact families in self-esteem (e.g. Kalter et al., 1985).

Evidence about the long-term effects of parental divorce on young adults' well-being (aged 18 and older) emerges from studies undertaken by Glenn and Shelton (1983) and Glenn and Kramer (1985, 1987). Analysis of the interviews they conducted indicated that the significant effects of divorce experienced during childhood persist into adulthood and that in examining the psychological well-being of adults the consequences of experiencing parental divorce during childhood are consistently negative. Along dimensions of psychological well-being, which included happiness, self-rated health and self-satisfaction in a range of life domains including families and friendships, men and women from divorced families as compared with their counterparts in intact families were significantly more likely to be at the negative end of the rating scales. The study indicated that there was no evidence that these negative effects diminish with age.

The majority of studies relating to the long-term effects of parental divorce on adult offspring concern the intergenerational consequences of family disruption, what Pope and Mueller (1976) called the "transmission of marital instability phenomenon". Wallerstein, in a series of longitudinal studies (Wallerstein, 1984, 1985, 1987; Wallerstein and Blakeslee, 1989) explored the long-term effects of divorce up to the time when individuals entered adulthood or were young-adults. She and her colleagues worked with individuals who attended for counselling, which followed a psychoanalytic clinical approach. The research concluded that the children of divorcees face many additional psychological burdens in addition to the normal tasks faced by

those growing up. These included particular difficulties in adolescence, intensified problems associated with leaving home, increased complexity of identification with parental figures when these identifications occurred within the context of conflict; and distinctive problems associated with the visiting or absent parent and the new figures introduced into the family by remarriage. Wallerstein also reports that almost all of the participants confronted issues relating to love, commitment and marriage with anxiety, sometimes with very great concern about betrayal, abandonment and not being loved. In response to this many of the young women, and some of the young men appeared counterphobically to have thrown themselves into short-lived sexual relationships (in the case of women these relationships usually involved an older partner). In addition, the young women's low self-esteem and the high rates of juvenile delinquency among adolescent girls of divorced parents, as well as the more negative feelings about men and marriage among college women from divorced families reflected their negative reactions to parental divorce (Wallerstein, 1985; Wallerstein, Corbin, & Lewis, 1988). Many of the young men were likely to avoid relationships with the opposite sex altogether. They also had ideas of a lasting marriage, but were frightened of repeating their parents' unhappy marriage. McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) reported higher rates of premarital pregnancy and early marriage among women whose parents had divorced during childhood and Kalter et al. (1985, p.542) reported that adult college women from divorced families were significantly less hopeful about the future and less certain about having a lasting marriage compared to their counterparts from intact families. They also reported a more negative image (saw females as less sensitive and less mature than those from intact families) of their own gender than those reared with both biological parents at home. Franklin et al. (1990, p.746), studying University students' beliefs about self and others, reported that parental divorce was related to college-aged students' belief that they will have less successful future marriages. Also, much of the research (Kinnaird and Gerrard, 1986; Rozendal, 1983) on attitudes towards divorce reported by young adults from divorced and intact families, indicates that children from separated or divorced homes have a more favourable attitude towards divorce than those from intact families. Greenberg and Nay (1982, p. 344) suggested a disinhibitory effect of parental divorce on young adults' (college students) attitudes towards divorce. However, the findings are not consistent.

Regarding divorcees' offspring's attitude towards marriage, Tasker (1992, p. 105), reported that

although teenagers from divorced families were less likely to say that they want to marry compared with adolescents from intact families, they in fact get married early as they are affected by factors associated with early marriage: leaving school, leaving home and forming serious girlfriend/ boyfriend relationships. This was especially the case for daughters of divorced parents who were most affected by these pro-marriage influences, since they were more likely to have left home early and be involved in steady relationships. These findings are supported by Glenn and Kramer (1987) who analysed interview data from 1982 to 1985. It was found that the estimated effect of childhood divorce on white women was substantial and significant. They reported that the divorce and /or separation rate for white female children of divorcees was 60% greater than that for white females from intact families. The divorce or separation rate for white male children of divorcees was 35% higher than for white male children from intact families. Further analysis lends strength to their hypothesis that the intergenerational transmission of marital instability is likely to be associated with "lower commitment to marriage" and the tendency of children, especially women, from families who divorced when they were children, to marry at an early age.

Similar to Glenn and Kramer's findings are those derived from studies focusing on college populations (Billingham et al., 1989; Fine et al., 1983, 1986; Southworth and Schwarz, 1987). Billingham's study, using 432 undergraduate women and 222 undergraduate men demonstrated that parental divorce appeared to have a significant effect on the sexual attitudes and sexual behaviours of young adults, both men and women: " for both the males and the females from divorced families the trend seemed to be towards sexual permissiveness without the ability to make commitments ... (Billingham et. al., 1989, p.9)". Similarly, Gabardi and Rosen (1992, p.25) using several measures of intimate relationships, indicated that college students (a non clinical population) from divorced families had more sexual partners and desired more sexual involvement when going steady than students from intact families. In addition parents' marital status was a significant predictor of sexual involvement while going steady and a significant predictor of self perceptions of sociability and morality.

Support for these studies is also found in the work of Weiss (1988) who studied interpersonal and intrapersonal space reported by adult divorcees' offspring aged 23-30, who experienced parental divorce during their adolescence compared with individuals reared in intact families. It was found



that children of divorcees were more 'tough- minded' and more distant 'to family' and to 'father' compared with members from intact families. Weiss suggests that the offspring of divorcees can become cynical about the permanency of relationships in general. Daughters of parental divorce appeared to become more solitary within interpersonal relationships. Also, Bolgar et al. (1995) who studied the long-term effects of parental divorce on interpersonal problems reported by young adults (22 years old), suggest that specific pre- and post-divorce experiences are associated with interpersonal problems including problems of intimacy.

Further illumination regarding these issues is provided by Mueller and Pope (1977). They studied the marital instability of adult females who came from divorced families. Their analysis was conducted using data from the 1970 National Fertility Survey. The data represented an entire population of females exposed to the risk of marital disruption (marital instability with regard to their first marriage). About one-half of the effect of parent instability is mediated by mate selection outcomes, with the high-risk circumstances of early and limited-education marriages being the most important. The relevance of these mate selection circumstances in the transmission process is interpreted within the framework of social control and economic rationale. Similar to these findings are those from Weiss's (1988) research. She studied the inter/ intrapersonal space of adult (23-30 years) divorcees' female offspring indicating that daughters of parental divorce appear to become more solitary within personal relationships. Weiss suggests their greater orientation to self than relationships is due to their experience of parental divorce and their perception that there is always a potential for primary relationships to be severed by choice. Studies focused on divorcees' offspring's (preschool children and adolescents) interpersonal relationships, although the evidence is sparse, suggest that children in disrupted families experience problems in peer relations (Santrock, 1975). They are less sociable, have fewer friends, spend less time with friends, and participate in fewer shared activities. However, Guidubaldi and Perry (1985) observed a different pattern indicating gender differences: among boys, those from divorced families had greater contact with friends, and among girls there were no differences in relation to family structure (Demo and Acock, 1988, p. 633). McLanahan and Bumpass (1988, p. 134) seem to offer the explanation that conflict between the parents and parent's absence combined with reduced parental ties affect parent- child relationships and increase the extent to which offspring may rely more on peers for comfort and direction.

Inconsistent with the above findings, indicating strong negative effects of parental divorce on divorcees' offspring, are the results emerging from the work of Kulka and Weingarten (1979) who stress that the early experience of divorce has only a modest effect on adults' adjustment. The data they used derive from two national surveys of the American adult population (persons 21 years of age or older, living in private households). However, they pointed out that although the study indicated that associations between psychological distress and early experience with parental divorce have weakened somewhat over the past two decades, coming from a non-intact family still has some significance for adult psychological well-being. This research also indicated that men and women from non-intact families display different patterns of adjustment to and valuation of the major life roles of spouse and parent. Although the study suggests that the effects of divorce fade with the passage of time, there is still some indication of residual effects. Also Gabardi and Rosen (1992, p. 45) indicated that there was no significant difference between college students from divorced and intact families along measures regarding intimacy, relationship beliefs, attitudes towards marriage and self-esteem. Buchanan and Brinke (1997, p.23) in their study based on data from the NCDS regarding the relationships between children's parenting experiences and their adult life, report that adults at age 33 brought up in restructured families were marginally below the average cohort score on attitudes to traditional marital values and the majority of men and women wanted to have both family and occupational life. Regardless of their parenting background, they reported their partner as the major source of support. Chase-Lansdale et al. (1995, p. 1629) using the National Child Development Study assessed the long-term effects on young adults, aged 23 years, who experienced parental divorce during childhood. They found that divorce has moderate effects on adult divorcees' offspring. Their analysis of the clinical cutoff scores showed that in relative terms, divorce was associated with a substantial (39%) increase in the risk of psychopathology. However, the small subgroup that is seriously affected does produce a large proportional increase in the size of the young adult population that may require clinical intervention. The same study indicated that by the age of 23 those whose parents divorced were more likely to leave home because of friction, to cohabit, and to have a child outside marriage than were those whose parents were not divorced. Young adults whose parents divorced, however, were more or less likely to marry or to have a child in a marriage. Moreover, even in the divorced group, the great majority did not leave home because of friction or have a child outside marriage (Cherlin, Kiernan and Chase-Lansdale, 1995, p.299).



In addition, findings relating to the detrimental effects of disruption of the parental family on offspring's personality development seem to be inconsistent. Nelson and Sundre (1992, p.132) reported that there was no significant difference between college students from homes where parental divorce occurred between the ages of 11-17 when compared to those who experienced parental divorce prior to age 11 and between individuals from intact families on the scores they reported on personality measures regarding identity and intimacy. Vess and Moreland (1983) also found no significant differences between individuals from divorced and intact families regarding the long term effects of early parental divorce on the sex role development of college students. However, further analysis indicated that the child's age at the time of divorce, the presence and sex of siblings, and post-divorce parental conflict played a role in the child's sex role development. This indicates that the status of the parental family does not appear to have a simple clear effect on offspring's development but mediating factors also have to be taken into account. Long (1986) investigated the effects of family structure and parental discord (rating of the happiness of the marriage of biological parents) on the self-esteem of 199 female undergraduates. She reported that it was parental discord rather than family structure which appeared to lower the self-esteem of daughters. However, Stone and Hutchinson (1992, p.79) reported that neither family structure nor the perceived levels of conflict in parental family were significant predictors of college students' attitudes towards divorce.

Apart from studies concentrating on the negative effects of parental divorce on adult offspring, there are investigators who have identified certain strengths in children who have experienced parental divorce (Demo and Acock, 1988, p. 627). Gately and Schwebel (1992, p. 57), in their review note that following the divorce of their parents some children, in comparison to peers or their own pre-divorce development, have shown enhanced levels of functioning in four areas: maturity (mature attitudes towards financial issues, increased understanding of self-reliance, a more realistic view of the hazards and potentials of marriage, responsibility for the care of self and others), self-esteem (a result of effective coping at home at school), empathy (a more realistic view of their parents' strengths and weaknesses and personality differences, appreciating the efforts and sacrifices of their custodial mothers) and androgyny (an increased willingness to assume personal and family responsibilities). These findings mainly emerge from two studies: Wallerstein (1984, 1987; Springer and Wallerstein, 1983; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1974) and



Hetherington (1989) who direct attention to two basic factors: children's developmental level at the time of parents' divorce and the amount of time that has elapsed between measurement and the point of separation or divorce. Although these findings seem to contradict those reported earlier, they may support our understanding of certain divorcees' offspring patterns of behaviour known as the intergenerational consequences of family disruption (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988). The variability of findings concerning the long-term effects of parental divorce on offspring can be understood through the lens of events occurring as the child grows up through adolescence into adult life which may modify these outcomes. Buchanan and Brinke (1997, p.72, 77) report that the context of parenting experiences has more effect than the structure of the family (birth, restructured, lone). For example, at age 33 both women and men who had been brought up in restructured families had rates of high Malaise scores which were similar to individuals brought up in birth families. No long-term psychological problems were identified in individuals at age 33, while both men and women raised by a lone parent (including divorced families) showed increased problems between 16 and 33. Also, independent factors (e.g. qualifications, employment, belonging to a non-manual social class) appeared to protect against psychological problems or increase the risks. Education was reported as a great escape route. The study suggests that the social attitude towards divorce is modifying over time according to the rate of divorce in the society.

### **The long term effects of divorce - Gender differences**

The majority of studies examining gender differences focus on young children and adolescents; very few of them consider young adults. Such evidence as there is indicates that living in an unmarried mother-custody home has long-term negative effects on boys, with deleterious outcomes appearing consistently from pre-school through to adolescence. In contrast girls from such families seem to recover almost completely from a divorce occurring early in their lives, functioning similarly to girls from non-divorce families during the pre-school and elementary school years (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990, p.107-150). However, although preadolescent girls in divorced mother-custody households adapt reasonably well to their family situation, at the onset of adolescence these girls may show increased conflict with their mothers, increased non-compliance, antisocial behaviour, emotional disturbance, loss of self-esteem, and problems in heterosexual relations and sexual behaviour (Newcomer and Udry, 1987).

Several studies support the conclusions about the effects on boys in early adolescence regarding externalising, aggression and delinquent behaviour and having less social competence than girls and children from intact families (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1985; Hetherington and Clingempeel, 1986; Chase-Landsdale and Hetherington, 1990). Boys also have been found to show less appropriate behaviour in school, less work effort, less happiness, more difficult peer relations, and a higher frequency of behaviour problems than other children (Guidubaldi and Perry, 1985). The pre-divorce family atmosphere had been indicated to dramatically affect boys' behaviour problems (Cherlin et al, 1991).

Not all the studies focusing on the behavioural adjustment of children of divorcees report gender differences. Taken together the research findings are inconsistent. A number of studies have found no gender differences in socially competent behaviour in non-divorced families (Santrock et al, 1982), or in long-term psychological adjustment after separation (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Kurdek, Blisk and Siesky, 1981).

Gender differences regarding the effects of disruption of parental family on interpersonal relationships developed by divorcees' offspring have emerged from some studies which have indicated that female divorcees' offspring are more vulnerable than their male counterparts to disruption of parental family regarding the interpersonal relationships they make with both friends (Guidibaldi and Perry, 1985) and partners (behavioural problems and difficulties in adjustment and psychological well-being). Relating to the friendships developed by boys and girls from divorced and intact families, Guidibaldi and Perry (1985) reported that among boys, those from divorced families had greater contact with friends and among girls there were no differences in relation to family structure (Demo and Acock, 1988, p. 633). Most research with adolescents and young adults emphasises the "sleeper effect" in adolescent girls and young adult women from divorced families (Zaslow, 1988). This is supported by evidence from a number of studies using varying methodologies-controlled observational, survey (Hetherington, 1972, Hetherington and Parke, 1987), and clinic-based data. Similar findings regarding the "sleeper effect" in adolescent girls and young adult women, come from studies of a clinical population. Kalter (1977; Kalter and Rembar, 1981) reported that adolescent girls of divorced parents were more likely to be promiscuous and develop other relationship disorders than adolescent boys of divorced parents

(e.g. parenting problems). Inconsistent with these findings are the results emerging from the work of Peterson and Zill (1986), who found in the National Survey of Children higher rates of shy, withdrawn behaviour among adolescent girls ages 11-16 living in single mother families than among girls in no-conflict non-divorced families (Chase-Landsdale and Hetherington, 1990, p.134).

Regarding the long-term effects of parental divorce on interpersonal problems reported by young adult divorcees' offspring, Bolgar et al. (1995, p.148) suggest that sons of divorcees who felt their father to have interfered to high or moderate degrees in their relationship with their mother after the separation reported more problems with intimacy in young adulthood than sons of divorcees who reported low paternal interference, daughters of divorce regardless of the level of paternal interference, and children from intact families. Research suggests the importance of the father's attitude in the triangular relationship of mother, father, and son after the parental separation for sons of divorcees as young adults exploring intimate relationships. Also, Gabardi and Rosen (1992, p. 49) studying differences between college students from divorced and intact families on several measures of intimate relationships, identified that gender was a significant predictor of sexual involvement with men from divorced families desiring and experiencing more sexual involvement than their female counterparts across several dating situations. In addition, Marlar and Jacobs (1992, p. 93) exploring differences in the marriage role expectations of college students from divorced and intact families, using the Marital Role Expectation Inventory (MREI) identified significant gender by marital status interactions in total MREI scores and subscores. Males with married parents were more companionship oriented than males with divorced parents; females with divorced parents were more companionship oriented while females with married parents were more traditional oriented in their marriage role expectations. However, Weiss (1988) report that females from divorced families become more solitary within personal relationships than those from intact homes. The findings indicate that the effects of divorce are mediated by gender.

Inconsistent with these findings are the results emerging from the work of Franklin et al. (1990, p. 747) who studied the long-term effects of divorce on adult divorcees' offspring (university students). They reported a lack of interaction between family status and gender in the long-term



outcomes regarding beliefs about the self and others (self-worth, marital optimism, benevolence of people). Shook and Jurich (1992, p.157) studying the effects of parental divorce on young adult college students' self-esteem and also differences in self-esteem rate reported by offspring from divorced and intact families indicated that females from divorced families rated themselves higher in self-esteem than their counterparts from intact families. Moreover, males from divorced families reported just slightly lower self-esteem rating than those males from intact families. However, there was no significant difference in self-esteem levels among male and female offspring from divorced families. Buchanan and Brinke (1997, p.45) in their study concerning the children's parenting experiences and their effects on their adult life, reported that men (aged 33) brought up in restructured, lone (including divorced families) and disadvantaged/restructured families were slightly less satisfied with their lives in adulthood than individuals brought up in birth families. The case for women was similar. The researchers point out the positive role of mediating factors i.e. presence of partner, employment, presence of children, higher financial/socio-economical status. The study also indicated that men (at age 23 and 33) brought up in a lone families (including divorced families) were at risk of psychological problems, in particular depression. The presence of a partner (for women) qualifications and employment for both men and women are suggested as protective factors. Regarding the attention focused on divorcees' male offspring's adjustment problems, Kalter et al. (1985) urged consideration of the hypothesis that significant patterns of response in girls have been largely overlooked: girls may manifest difficulties following divorce at different and less frequently studied points in time than do boys (adolescence and adulthood), and on different variables (self-esteem, feelings about heterosexual relations) whose operations are more difficult to trace than those more typically studied (Zaslow, 1988, p. 356).

To conclude, the long-term effects of parental divorce can affect offspring's well-being interpersonal relationships and occupational life. The majority of the findings from studies focusing on the long-term effects of divorce indicate that although the effects of divorce fade with the passage of time, residual effects still exist in relation to partnerships and friendships in which offspring become involved. Research with clinical populations indicates gender differences in the effects of parental divorce, related to avoidance of relationships or involvement in short-lived sexual relationships. However, the sample may not be representative of the general population.

Females from divorced families are more likely than males to get divorced themselves. The literature also indicates consistent findings for both male and female divorcees' offspring regarding being dissatisfied with relationships and possessing different sexual attitudes and behaviour from their counterparts from intact families. Evidence from longitudinal studies, mainly focused on late childhood and adolescence indicate that the effects of parental divorce and events during the pre-divorce period are more detrimental for boys when they live with their mother than girls in terms of internalising and externalising behaviours. However, the results are not consistent. The mother's and father's attitudes and involvement in mother-father-son relationships are also related to problems of intimacy experienced by young adult divorcees' offspring. Inconsistent findings possibly indicate the importance of mediating factors like significant others as sources of support in the course of divorce, the nature of child/non-custodial parent's relationship, economic decline, custodial parent's capability to cope with the new situation effectively including teaching levels of compliance, and events and situations concerning offspring's adult life (e.g. education, qualifications, economical status, personal life). This implies the need for studies focusing on the divorce scenario in great detail in order to identify the particular facts and network of relationships which mediate and lead to particular patterns of behaviour. Qualitative methodology may enable a deeper understanding of these issues.

### **Factors mediating the long-term effects of parental divorce**

The earlier findings of Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) distinguish seven ways in which the divorce process seems to influence the long-term well-being of the children. They are: the extent to which the parents are able to put aside and contain their own conflicts; the changes in parent-child relationships; the extent to which a child is able to continue a non-rejecting relationship with the non-custodial parent on a regular basis; the characteristics and personality of the child; their ability to turn to parents and others, and the availability of supportive people; and the sex and age of the child and the absence of continuing anger and depression (Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington, 1990, p.171). The following sections discuss these (except child's personality) and in greater depth.

## **A. Mediating factors: interpersonal relationships: child-parents, child-stepparent relationships**

**Child-custodial parent, gender of the custodial parent (the mother-son case):** The majority of studies indicate the mediating role of the gender of the custodial parent, suggesting that children adjust better with the parent of the same sex than with the one of the opposite sex. Hetherington (1987) in common with other researchers, following her comparative longitudinal study (1987) of mother custody families, states that there is some evidence that following divorce the children may adjust better in the custody of a parent of the same sex (Kelly, 1988, p.170; Petterson and Zill, 1986, p.306). Such findings regarding the variation of the effects of the custody with the gender of parent and the child, support a perspective based on parental absence- socialization rather than economic hardship, which is usually the case in mother custody families (Amato and Keith, 1991, p.38), although McLanahan and Bumpass (1988, p. 134) report that there is disagreement about whether lack of parental control is due to conflict between the parents or to parent absence and reduced parental ties. However, studies focusing on the long-term effects of childhood custody arrangement do not indicate any connection between that and the interpersonal problems (Bolgar et al., 1995) reported by young adult divorcees' offspring and between that and the intergenerational consequences of family disruption (teenage marriage, teenage birth, premarital birth, marital disruption) (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988, p.144). Furthermore, the mother's involvement in the father-child relationship after the divorce also plays a significant role in the offspring's involvement in intimate relationships. McLanahan and Bumpass report that mother's adopting an interfering stance in the father-child relationship after the divorce proved difficult for both sons and daughters. The mother's ability to be non-interfering in the original triangular relationship of mother-father-child, that inevitably constitutes a blueprint of adult relationships after the divorce, may be helpful to young adults grappling with intimate relationships (Bolgar et al., 1995, p.149).

Many studies focus on divorcees' boys difficulty to successfully adjust with their mothers after the divorce. Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington (1990, p. 134) report that for unmarried mothers and their sons, the central family process is one of coercive interaction, (related to mothers' failure to teach reasonable levels of compliance). The coercive cycles of mother-son interaction identified



soon after divorce in mother-custody families seem to continue for as long as 6 years after divorce. In two studies 6 and 4 years after divorce respectively (Hetherington, 1987; Hetherington and Clingempeel, 1986), non-remarried mothers and their early adolescent sons exhibited more negative interactive behaviour during a family problem-solving task at home than either daughters from divorced families or children of either sex in non-divorced families. The work of Patterson and his colleagues (Patterson, 1986) indicates probable steps in the long-term sequelae of this coercive interaction pattern. Sons who participate in coercive interaction at home are likely to have poor peer relations and disciplinary and academic problems at school, and are thus perceived relatively negatively by their teachers. These negative consequences at school then fuel the boys' low sense of self-esteem as well as their uncontrolled behaviour at home, prompting parents to be even more coercive and irritable in response. The coercive mother-son pair are more likely to perceive events negatively because of their stressed state. This may possibly lead them to be causal agents of negative life events, for example by being irritable with friends who may then abandon the friendship (Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington, 1990, p.135). Demo and Acock (1988, p. 626) in their review of the effects of divorce on children, report that boys reared in mother-headed families miss adult male role models and demonstrate more feminine behaviour (Biller, 1976). Lamb (1977) argues that because gender identity is usually developed by age 3 and because family influences are central to this process, the effects of father absence on gender appropriate behaviour may be most pronounced among boys who are very young at the time of family disruption. Similar to these findings are those of Buehler and Legg (1992, p. 189) concerning parenting situations and children's social competence assessed by the CAAP (child and adolescent profile) scale. They collected information from mothers involved in the divorce process who had a child between the ages of 3 and 18. The analysis of the data indicated that the relationship between coercion and child dependency and productivity (dimensions of social competence) differed for sons and daughters. Regarding dependency, the relationship was positive for both groups (more coercion related to more dependency and vice versa) while regarding productivity the relationship was negative for both groups. Concerning both dependency and productivity, the relationship was stronger for sons than daughters. Comparing children aged 6 through 11, the relationship between mother's coercion and anxiety/withdrawal (a dimension of social competence) was positive for adolescents and negative for school-aged children.

**Custodial parent's remarriage and step-parents:** The child-stepfather relationship has been indicated as crucial by the relevant literature for the child's adjustment. Difficulties in these relationships, although apparent at the beginning of their life together diminish over time (Emery, 1988, p.99). The situation appears to be worse for teenagers (Hetherington et al., 1982) while young children seem to adapt more easily to the relationship with the step-parent (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). The impact of the step-father is mediated by the quality of the child-custodial parent relationship (troubled or loving) (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1984), the custodial parent's psychological state (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980), the emotional and financial support given by the step-father, the way he gets involved in the child's life and whether or not he is welcomed by the natural father (Hetherington et al., 1982).

Gender differences although not consistent, have been demonstrated in the literature, showing that boys benefit from the presence of a step-father while this is not the case for girls. Amato and Keith (1995, p.37), focusing on five studies exploring the effect of step-parent on boys and girls, also report that the presence of a step-father improves the well-being of boys but either has no effect on or decreases the well-being of girls (Chapman, 1977; Hetherington et al., 1985; Peterson & Zill, 1986; Santrock, 1972; Santrock et al., 1982). In cases where the natural parent welcomed the involvement of the step-parent, and the step-parent was an authoritative parent in the sense of being warm, willing to set consistent limits, and communicating well with the step-child, children in step families, particularly boys, functioned better than those in divorced, un-remarried families, or conflict-ridden, non-divorced families. In the same study, home observations showed that mothers with a supportive new partner had a much better relationship with their sons than those unremarried or with an unhelpful new partner. There were also positive results for the daughters of mothers who married a supportive new partner (Hetherington et al, 1982, p.283-284). These findings conflict with those of Santrock et al. (1982) who report that the presence of a step-father may be associated with adverse outcomes for girls. Santrock et al. (1982) studied the social development of children in father-custody families by comparing them with children in mother-custody and intact families. They found that the disequilibrium created by the father's remarriage produced a positive effect for daughters but a negative one for sons. For the boys who seemed to get along well within a single-parent father-custody family, the step-mother may produce conflict, since the boy has to share his father with the step-mother and their children and

he will enjoy his father's presence for less time (Santrock et. al., 1982, p.310-311). The negative effects of the presence of step-parents in children's well-being is reported by Amato and Keith (1995, p.37). They used the meta-analysis method to explore the well-being of children living in single parent divorced families and those in intact families. They reported that children in step-families compared with children in intact two parents families, were significantly lower in good conduct, psychological adjustment, self-esteem and social relations and were marginally lower in academic achievement. The researchers reported that parental remarriage does not 'solve' the problems that may have been generated by an absent parent.

Only a few studies have examined the long-term effects of parental divorce regarding interpersonal problems reported by divorcees' offspring. Bolgar et al. (1995), who focused on the problems of intimacy reported by young adult divorcees' offspring (22 years), noted that stable maternal remarriage was positive for both the daughters and sons of divorce, but that the benefit became apparent only later in life as the children of divorcees explored young adult relationships. However, they reported that young adult children of unremarried or multiple remarried mothers were the subgroups reporting the most interpersonal problems, including problems with intimacy. Close relationships between the mother and adult daughters after remarriage are reported by Buchanan and Brinke (1997, p.34) who found that women from disadvantaged restructured families went to their parents for support while this was not the case for men. However, these daughters were significantly less likely to go to their family first for financial support.

**Contact with the non-custodial parent:** Longitudinal studies have shown the importance of contact for the child with the non-resident parent, usually the father (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Hetherington and Clingempeel, 1992). The quality and nature of contact in these studies was found to have important implications for the child; more frequent contact was associated with better adjustment. Research indicates that more highly educated parents kept more regular contact with their children after the divorce than lower educated fathers (Furstenberg et al., 1983). Contact can provide children with the reassurance that the departed parent still cares for his offspring as well as strengthen the relationship between the non-custodial parent and the child (White et al, 1985; Shook and Jurich, 1992, p. 161). However, this was not the case for all the studies. Hodges (1986) found that frequent contact with the non-resident father was linked to



greater aggression. Regarding the long-term effects of child/non-custodial parent contact, the work of Shook and Jurich (1992, p. 170) indicated that contact with the father had a significant but negative impact on self-esteem scores reported by young adult female divorcees' offspring. Although in most studies the role of the non-resident parent is one of "providing entertainment, leisure", since the resident parent may be undertaking all of the accepted parental duties and responsibilities towards the child (Pasley and Ihinger-Talman, 1987), the findings overall are not consistent. In the Furstenberg and Nord (1985) study children with low levels of contact with their non-resident parent were ten times more likely to include this parent as a member of their family than their resident parent was. The Exeter study (Cockett and Tripp, 1994) indicated that the beneficial effects of non-resident parent/child relationships on a regular basis were mediated by poor parental communication, when the non-resident parent-child contact was perceived as threatening and undermining by the resident parent. It was also found that children were aware of their non-resident parent's lack of interest (Cockett and Tripp, 1994, p.45, 46, 68). Inconsistency in the research findings regarding the effects of the frequency of child/non-custodial parent contact is reported by Amato and Keith (1991, p. 37). Metanalysis of a range of studies regarding the effects of divorce on children's well-being indicated that six of the studies reported a positive effect, six found no association between the frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent and children's well-being, while three found that contact is associated with increased problems for children.

Regarding the long-term effects of child non-custodial parent contact on offspring's interpersonal relationships, during young adulthood (22 years old), Bolgar et al. (1995) reported that no high or low levels of contact with the out-of-home parent (father, in the majority of the cases) were associated with young adult interpersonal problems. This is consistent with Southworth and Schwarz's (1987) finding in college age daughters of divorce that contact with the father was a weak predictor of heterosexual trust and was not associated with differences in anticipated age of marriage, or cohabitation before marriage. It is interesting that Bolgar et al. (1995) reported in their study that the quality of the relationship between the biological parents appeared more important to the young adults than the level of contact with the out-of-home parent.

**Parental conflict (pre and post-divorce conflict) as a moderating factor in parental divorce effects on children:** The pre and post divorce relationship between parents has emerged as a critical factor for children's later adjustment. Emery (1988, p.97) reports that interparental conflict can disrupt children's socialization experiences. Aggression may be learned from witnessing angry parental battles (Porter and O'Leary, 1980) and from inconsistent discipline. Discipline can be inconsistent due to the parents' lack of agreement about child-rearing philosophies or lack of communication about each other's opinions and actions (Emery, 1988, p.98).

Many studies interestingly emphasize the long-term impact of marital conflict preceding divorce. According to O'Leary and Emery (1984, p.120) to speak of the short term effects of marital conflict in divorced families is perhaps a misnomer, since marital conflict may have predated divorce for many years. Most divorces are preceded and accompanied by marital conflict (Emery, 1982). Children are most at risk when exposure to conflict is prolonged or intense (Camara and Resnick, 1988) and their psychological functioning improves if the conflict diminishes (Peterson and Zill, 1986; Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington, 1990). In the majority of cases, conflict escalates after separation and divorce (Hetherington et al., 1982; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). The intensification of conflict after divorce is related to disagreements regarding child rearing and visitation practices and finances, whereas decisions regarding property provision, custody and visitation are often significant points of conflict prior to the divorce settlement (Emery, 1982; Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington, 1990, p.114; Goodyear, 1990, p. 178). On the other hand there are studies which indicate the possibility that the conflicts start at the time of the decision to become divorced and although parents manage to make harmonious arrangements about children's issues they continue fighting (Schaffer, 1990; Cockett and Tripp, 1994 p.70). However, there is also considerable evidence that differences between children who have experienced separation and divorce and children in intact families lessen over time (Kurdek et al, 1981; Parish and Wigle, 1985).

The detrimental effect of alliances, formed by parents against each other, on divorcees' offspring adjustment is also discussed in some studies. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) report that in the early post-separation period many parents tried to involve their children actively in forming hostile alliances against the other parent, which precipitated feelings of confusion, conflict, guilt and

hostility in the children. It seems to be the current conflict rather than the past conflict that is associated with most emotional and behavioural problems in children (Hetherington et al., 1982, p.262). These findings are supported by the Exeter study (Cockett and Tripp, 1994).

Many studies have concentrated on the effect of parental conflicts during the divorce period in divorcees' offspring adjustment and relationships with other children. Camara and Resnick (1988) studied the role of parental conflict during the divorce period in relation to children's adjustment (during the two years following the divorce). Parents who generally co-operated in the post-divorce period and used negotiation and compromise when disagreements did occur were more likely to have children who were more affiliative in play with other children and who had higher self-esteem. The significant correlations between degree of parental co-operation and the quality of the non-custodial parent relationships indicate that, regardless of the level of existing conflict between the two adults, former spouses who are able to cooperate around parental concerns tend to have warmer and more communicative relationships with their children (Camara and Resnick, 1989, p. 572, 573). This is supported by the research of Kurdek and Berg (1983), Jacobson (1978), Luepnitz (1982), Johnston et al. (1987, 1989). They indicated that less conflict and greater cooperation between parents predicted better divorce adjustment and fewer problems among children. Such findings are consistent with Amato and Keith's (1991, p. 39) meta-analysis of 92 studies comparing children in divorced single-parent families with children living in continuously intact families on measures of well-being. Children's well-being was inversely related to the level of post-divorce conflict that persisted between parents. Also, Wallerstein's studies indicate that cooperation between parents increases offspring's self-esteem since emotional closeness between parents and children eliminates feelings of rejection and self-blame which relate to the majority of divorcees' offspring.

Regarding the long-term effect of parental conflicts on young adult divorcees' offspring, research suggests that high levels of parental discord, before and after divorce, are associated with interpersonal problems for young adults (e.g. college students from divorced families had more sexual partners and desired more sexual involvement when going steady than students from intact families and reported negative attitudes towards marriage) (Booth et al., 1984; Franklin et al., 1990; Gabardi and Rosen, 1992). Bolgar et al.(1995) studying the interpersonal problems reported



by young adult divorcees' offspring found that high levels of pre-separation parental hostility were associated with a greater sense of being too controlling in their interpersonal relationships, and high or moderate levels of maternal interference in the child's relationship with the father after separation were associated with greater problems in intimacy. Holdnack (1992, p. 153), studying the effects of parental divorce on University students, reported that the emotionally distant perceptions of family, reported by divorcees' offspring was related to low scores on self-esteem as a result of disruptions in the interpersonal closeness within the child's family.

To conclude, there are a number of well-established factors that mediate parental divorce effects: child-parent, child/step-parent relationships and pre- and post-divorce interparental relationships. There is evidence that following divorce children may adjust better in the custody of a parent of the same sex. However, this relationship is likely to take the form of friendship between parent-child which is related to intergenerational transmission of marital instability because of a lack of teaching of compliance and appropriate patterns of discipline. Mother-son coercive interaction has been indicated by a number of researchers. Mother's intervention in mother-father-son relationship is inversely related to young adult divorcees' offspring's intimacy in relationships. The presence of step-parents is mediated by many variables. There is evidence that boys benefit more than girls from the presence of step-parents, and young children adjust more easily than adolescents (the most disturbed group) to a step-father's presence. But overall, the research evidence regarding the effects of the presence of a step-parent in an offspring's life is inconsistent. Young adult offspring seem to benefit from stable maternal remarriage. Research provides inconsistent evidence for the effects of the contact children have with their non-custodial parent. The quality of the contact mediates the effects of the frequency of child-non custodial parent contact. Child-parent contact does not seem to play any significant role in interpersonal problems and patterns of personal life reported by young adult divorcees' offspring. This possibly implies their detachment from the parental family and relationships with parents. However, cultural factors affect such suggestions in terms of the role of family in a particular society. Cross-cultural studies would seem important to be carried out in the future. Pre and post divorce interparental conflict relates to children's level of disturbance and young adult offspring's interpersonal relationships. There is also inconsistent information regarding the effect of parental co-operation around children's issues indicating warm child-parent relationships are of a positive nature where parents continue fighting on a personal

level. The inconsistent nature of the research indicates a range of factors mediating any particular finding and possibly implies that findings in isolation should be considered with caution. The mediating effects of a series of relationships and situations like: the nature of the custodial parent's emotions, child/step-parent relationships, the child's age and the nature of his/her relationship with the non-custodial parent which could be understood through the lens of a psychoanalytic approach, although it does not dominate in the relevant literature as a theoretical framework, could possibly account for the inconsistent findings.

### **B. Mediating factors beyond the family interpersonal relationships**

**Age:** The individuals' age when the parental divorce took place is indicated as a mediating factor for the effect of parental divorce on interpersonal relationships, emotional disturbance and behavioural problems (Wadsworth, 1979). Wallerstein (1984) considers that it is pre-school children who are the most vulnerable group, while those who are adolescent are the second most vulnerable group. In the latest follow up (1989) she and her colleagues discovered in young women entering adulthood a phenomenon, which she describes as the "sleeper effect" (Robinson, 1991, p.169). Wadsworth (1979) also reported that by the age of 26, those divorcees' offspring who experienced parental divorce before the age of 6, had a higher rate of hospital admission for emotional disturbance and stomach ulcers. She also (1979) found that parental divorce may indicate the starting point of a future chain of vulnerability (Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington, 1990, p.171).

Studies exploring the long-term effects of divorce regarding adult offspring's interpersonal problems (Bolgar et al., 1995) suggest that the long-term effects do not appear to be age-at-divorce related. Similar to this finding is that emerging from the work of Greenberg and Nay (1982, p.344) regarding the intergenerational transmission of marital instability. This study did not reveal any significant differences between college students whose parents separated before and after the age of 12 on attitudes towards marriage and dating adjustment. Also, Franklin et al. (1990, p. 747) studying the effects of divorce on university students, identified that individuals' age at the time of divorce was not related to any long-term outcome measures used in the study (benevolence of people, marital optimism and self-worth). These findings are supported by those emerging from

the study of Buehler and Legg (1992, p.177) regarding children's social competence (dependency, aggression, anxiety/ withdrawal, productivity) and post-separation events. They identified consistent results relating to the mother's parenting, the father's visitation and the children's social competence, regardless of the child's age when divorce happened. However, Shook and Jurich (1992, p. 157) reported that the age at the time of parental divorce was the most significant factor contributing to the self-esteem of male offspring (college students). The older the male offspring was at the time of divorce the greater was his level of self- esteem.

**Preparing children (information provided to children about parental divorce):** Preparation for parental divorce and the explanations children are offered about parental divorce appear to be related to children's reports of being left confused and bewildered and often hoping for reconciliation for far longer than their parents imagined. Many studies indicate that the majority of children (Cockett and Tripp, 1994; Mitchel, 1985; Hetherington et al, 1985) do not understand the reason for their parent's divorce. In the Exeter study (Cockett and Tripp, 1994) it was found that only five of the 76 children in re-ordered families had received a joint explanation about the departure of one parent from the family home before it actually happened. The others had received either separate explanations from both their parents, or had been told about the break-up by both of their parents but only after one of the parents had left. In some cases it was left to the mother to explain the situation to her children. In other cases children received little or no information about the divorce. In these instances the parents believed that the children were too young to know what was happening or believed that further explanation was unnecessary.

**Economic decline:** This is one of the factors cited to explain the long-term adverse outcomes of divorce. However, McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) and Peterson and Zill (1986) found negative outcomes (early marriage, premarital birth, marital disruption, remarriage reported by adult divorcees' offspring and behaviour problems in children from divorced families respectively) while controlling for family background characteristics such as education and income. Although downward economic mobility may be a long-term sequel to divorce (Kongidou, Pantazis, 1990; Kongidou, 1996), it also seems likely that the long-term outcomes relate to qualitative differences in family processes in single mother families and non-divorced families (Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington, 1990, p.134). Inconsistent findings regarding the financial status of re-ordered



families are reported by the Exeter study (Cockett and Tripp, 1994, p. 12) concerning the custodial parent's feeling of having control over her/his finances or benefitting from the income of a new partner. Amato and Keith's (1991, p.38) study also provides little evidence to support the idea that the mother's remarriage enhances the well-being of the children of divorced parents due to the improvement in their financial status. A consequence of financial decline is that most custodial parents have to work, therefore they are constrained in the amount of time and energy they can devote to their children (Brandwein et al., 1974). For these reasons children of divorcees often experience a decrease in parental attention, help and supervision (Amato and Keith, 1991, p.27). These studies are supported by information reported by divorcing mothers in the study of Buehler and Legg (1992, p. 176). They explored the social competence of divorcees' offspring (dependency, aggression, anxiety/withdrawal, productivity) and identified that the negative relationship between companionship with the mother and child anxiety was much stronger in families who were struggling financially than in those families who had adequate finances.

**Support systems:** During the divorce process and afterwards, the support provided in the environment sometimes decreases parents' and children's stress. Hetherington et al.(1982) report several support systems such as: grandparents, brothers and sisters, close friends, other divorced friends or partners with whom there was an intimate relationship, or a competent housekeeper. These sources of support were influential in the mother's effectiveness in interacting with children. Grandparents who live in the area can play a supportive role for both children and parents in terms of helping with finances, child care and emotional support. Demo and Acock (1988, p. 642) reviewing the literature report that kinship ties are usually strained, as both biological parents and parents in law are more critical of the divorce than are friends (Spanier and Thompson, 1984). In the Exeter study (Cockett and Tripp, 1994), maternal grandparents tended to be more supportive of both parents and children. Lack of support from the maternal grandparents (although quite rare) was almost entirely attributable to the re-disruptive family (families where the custodial parent got divorced for a second time). This lack of support in some cases or re-ordered families in others was connected with the grandparents wish for and pressure on their children to re-build their social life or find a new partner (Cockett and Tripp, 1994, p.33-34).

However, none of these support systems was as salient as a continued, positive, mutually

supportive relationship of the couple and continued involvement of the father with the child. Santrock et al. (1982) report that support systems were more in evidence where fathers had custody than mothers. Father-custody children had more contact with their non-custodial parent than their counterparts in mother-custody homes. In both types of custody situations, total contact (the amount of time they spent) with adult caretakers was positively related to the child's warmth, sociability, and social conformity.

To conclude, the most common factors mediating parental divorce, beyond child-parent and child/step-parent relations, are related to the age of the child when the divorce took place, information s/he had about the divorce, economic decline and support systems. Research indicates that pre-school children are the first and adolescents the second most vulnerable groups in parental divorce, respectively. A developmental and possibly psychoanalytic approach to exploration of these issues seems to be the most appropriate one which also implies the need for a qualitative methodology, clinical interviews. However, age at divorce does not seem to be a crucial factor in young adults divorcees' offspring interpersonal problems. This should be perceived as a positive finding in terms of the possibility of divorcees' offspring who experienced parental divorce at a crucial age to be as likely as others to recover from it. There are consistent research findings that children lacking preparation and information about parental divorce feel confused and bewildered. This possibly indicates a useful metacognition dimension for counselling and it seems to be useful information for parents who are in the process of divorce or separation. Downward economic mobility seems to follow the majority of divorces although there are some research findings which indicate this is not the case. Qualitative differences in family processes seem to mediate the effect of economic decline. The effect of economic decline on children is also mediated by the custodial parent's limited time and energy available to devote to them, due to his/her participation in the labour force. This situation may imply positive impact on divorcees' offspring where the mother becomes a model of an independent, efficient strong female. At the same time this implies a representation of self as becoming easily detached from a marriage and being able to handle any adverse situation that has emerged from it. These contradicting explanations seem to illuminate the reasons for the inconsistent research findings regarding the consequences of parental divorce on divorcees' offspring and indicate the need for detailed studies. An appropriate methodology might be case studies, individual cases explored in great depth, allowing individuals to express

themselves, interpret their patterns of behaviour and reveal links between the scenario of parental divorce and their actions in certain situations. The factors related to the effects of parental divorce are also mediated by the sources of support available. Father-custody families report a greater network of sources of support (usually family and friends), compared with that reported in mother-custody families. This possibly indicates a social mediating factor which prevents fathers from being effective parents. This may imply changes to the existing law regarding child custody.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **POSSIBLE SELVES**

#### **The theory of possible selves.**

The theory of possible selves is recently developed. It introduces an alternative approach to considering self-concept and personalised motivation. According to Markus and Ruvolo (1989, p.214) the roots of the theory derive from the work of Wundt (1894) who introduced the 'willing self' concept. Wundt assumed that a cause of voluntary actions was an individual's 'willing self' which was determined by motives and feelings.

Markus and Nurius (1987, p. 158) define possible selves as conceptions of the self in a future state (e.g. a glamorous self, a dependent self). The repertoire of possible selves contained within an individual's self system are the cognitive manifestations of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears and threats which regulate our behaviour. Possible selves provide specific cognitive form, organisation, direction and self-relevant meaning to these dynamics. As such they provide an essential link between the self-concept and motivation. The above researchers (1987) also report that by focusing on the self-knowledge that accompanies an individual's goals, fears and threats we are pursuing a cognitive approach to the self. From this point of view, the self-concept is not a unitary or monolithic entity but rather a system of salient identities or self schema (Markus, 1977) that lend structure and meaning to one's self relevant experiences.

Cross and Markus (1991, p. 233), report that possible selves are the elements of the self-system that can most easily assume new form. This flexibility or adaptability of one's possible selves is based on two characteristics unique to such selves. First, possible selves are often quite private and not shared with others. So an individual may revise his or her possible selves in order to promote or protect self-esteem, without the knowledge or influence of others. Secondly, possible selves, although influenced by others, are primarily defined and evaluated by the individual. It is the individual him/herself who decides which selves are possible and impossible and whether a given possible self has been achieved. Hence, possible selves, unlike current or past selves, are usually not firmly anchored in one overt social action and have not been the subject of negotiation through social experience. As a consequence, individuals have considerable freedom to define and

redefine their significant possible selves. Overall, possible selves seem to consist of elements of self-schemas which compose ones' self-concept, a malleable entity, which is amenable to changes of schemata dominating one's working self-concept affecting also one's self-esteem and self-efficacy.

### **Possible selves and self-schemas**

Pursuing this line of thinking, the self-concept is perceived as a system of self-schemas. Self-schemas are affective, cognitive structures that are built up creatively and selectively on the basis of one's experiences in a given domain (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, p.212). They influence both input and output information related to the self (Markus, 1977, p.65). Once established a self-schema functions as a selection mechanism and the person will be readily able to: process information about the self in the given domain, retrieve relevant past behaviours, predict his/her behaviour in a domain, and resist inconsistent-counter schematic information about himself (Markus, 1977, p.65). Markus and Sentis (1982, p. 66) also report that stimuli inconsistent with knowledge stored in the self-structures have little chance of representation due to strong and well-articulated existing self-structures. An articulated self-schema is likely to be created in cases where the person has invested in certain kinds of behaviour for a long time.

Markus and Sentis (1982, p. 45) report that self-schemata are generalizations about the self derived from the repeated categorisations and evaluations of behaviour by oneself and by others. The result is a well-differentiated idea of the kind of person one is with respect to a variety of domains of behaviour. Individuals only develop schemata about those aspects of their behaviour that are important to them in some way. Self-schemata search for information that is congruent with them and direct behaviour so that it is commensurate and consistent with them. People with a self-schema in a particular domain (teacher, parent, spouse) are defined as those who consider their domains to be of critical personal importance.

Wurf and Markus (1986) in one of their studies exploring the idea of self schemas (shyness, outgoingness, independence), compared schematics with aschematics and found that the schematics (individuals with a self-schema in these domains) had many more selves both positive and negative in the domain of self schemas than did aschematics (individuals who did not have

schemas in these domains) (Markus and Nurius, 1987, p. 166). There was no difference among them regarding the number or elaboration of possible selves in domains for which neither group had a schema. These findings support Markus' idea that self schemas are the results of a continuing investment in a particular domain of behaviour. As a result they do not reflect past behaviour but very importantly contain goals and plans for future behaviour. Similar to these findings are those from Lips's research (1995, p. 1671, 1681). She investigated important concomitants of university students' current and possible self elements through the lens of maths/science schema. It was identified that positive and negative schematics were more confident than aschematics in 'me' and 'not me' math/science self-descriptions, and in possible math/science career. Also, intentions to take more mathematics and the total courses subsequently taken were greater for positive than negative schematics. The lack of significant gender effects, although the relevant literature indicated massive under-representation of women in these fields, indicates that math/science self-schemas do not operate in isolation from other self-schemata (one's gender sociocultural identity was reported as a mediating factor). Consequently, if self schemas are thought to regulate actions it is because they contain possible selves which give substance and direction to certain end states and to the associated plans or strategies for achieving them. The role of self schemas and possible selves, consequently, is of most importance for the self-concept, which could not guide behaviour, without them (Markus and Nurius, 1987, p.166). Self schemas are not just memories of past actions or passive generalisations about ongoing actions. They are also claims of responsibility for one's future actions in this domain. Possible selves are thus viewed as the elements of the self schema that give structure and meaning to the future in the individual's domains of investment and concern (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, p. 213). Consequently, this theory seems to be unique in the way that future behaviour is interpreted via the cognitive schemata created through the course of individuals' lives.

One of the most important ways in which self-schemas allow the individual to go 'beyond the information given' is in the anticipation of what might be and what is possible in a given domain. The ability to anticipate specific futures is thus a powerful consequence of becoming schematic in a given domain. Current thinking on the role of anticipation suggests that imagining an action involves running at least part of the sequence of actions that would normally accompany or govern the imaged actions; and imagining one's own actions through the construction of elaborated



possible selves achieving the desired goal may thus directly facilitate the translation of goals into intentions and instrumental actions. Possible selves then can be seen as the elements of self-schemas that are essential for putting the self into action. They are action oriented representations which allow for more obvious connections between individuals' internal structures and their overt actions (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, p. 213).

### **Possible selves and the working self-concept**

Markus and Nurius (1986, 1987) suggest a crucial link between possible selves and the working self-concept. Markus and Ruvolo (1989, p. 213) assume that possible selves function as they become part of the working self-concept. The working self-concept is drawn from the self system which contains a vast repertoire of self representations, self schemas, possible selves, plans, strategies and rules for behaviour. Markus and Ruvolo (1989, p.223) assume that "the working self concept is a biased selection from one's complete repertoire of possible selves". Some of the self representations are core and some are more peripheral. Nurius (1991, p. 240) reports that some self-conceptions may form the core of the individual's sense of identity and be so continuously drawn upon that they become transituationally salient while the majority are likely to be primed and thus brought into active service on a much less frequent and more contingent basis. That is different sets of self-conceptions are likely to be primed in response to differing situations, domains or tasks and thereby be salient and 'working' for the individual on a more periodical basis. These subsets of self-conceptions serve as the basis for subsequent attributions (by oneself and others in the immediate social environment) as well as for action alternatives. They thereby provide one concrete reflection of the Meadian interactionism that conceives of stimuli becoming objects only as they take on personal meaning and of objects as situationally constituted from the perspective of the participants in the ongoing activity. The working self concept and consequently possible selves can be seen as specific manifestations of the self-situation transaction. Nurius (1991, p. 248) also reports that social activity facilitates a configuration of the prevailing working self-concept through priming of biased sets of self-conceptions (elicitation) and through mood and belief altering esteem-enhancing appraisals (validation).

On this line of thinking is Markus and Kunda's (1986, p. 859) suggestion that the working self-concept "consists of one's core self-conceptions embedded in a context of more tentative self-conceptions that are tied to the immediate social circumstances". Hence, the self-concept appears malleable because the contents of the working self-concept change according to what subset of selves was active just prior to activity, to what has been invoked by the individual as a result of an experience and to what has been elicited by the social situation at a given time (Markus and Kunda, 1986, p.859). Since the functional self-concept of a particular activity, the working self-concept, is a non-random sample from the universe of one's self-conceptions, it can then be viewed as a continually active, shifting array of accessible self-representations. Self-representations (semantic, imaginal, inactive) become active when they are triggered by self-relevant events or when they are more deliberately invoked by the individual in response to an event or a situation. This working self-concept is instrumental in the regulation of behaviour, and how efficiently it can regulate behaviour depends on its structure (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, pp.213-214). Recent studies indicate that the working self-concept regulates performance (Ruvolo and Markus, 1992) and indicate the crucial role of this in the nature of the possible selves activated. Ruvolo and Markus (1992, p. 117) in their study regarding effective performance of students and the content of the working self-concept reported that individuals in the condition of imagining failure as a result of their own efforts required longer to endorse positive possibilities and longer to reject (response latencies) negative possibilities of being failures. This indicates that it is not that the content of the repertoire of possibilities had changed but rather at that moment images and conceptions of positive possibility were not on line as part of the working self-concept (p.117). In addition, it was suggested that a negative working self-concept consumes attention and energy that could be devoted to performance of the task at hand. Those who have imagined their own failure may become what Kuhl (1985) calls state-oriented. That is focused on their psychological state and how they are feeling, as opposed to action-oriented where attention is focused on how to solve the problem. The study also reveals the motivating role of the working self-concept indicating that what increases motivation and performance is not positive feelings but rather the specific imagined self-relevant possibilities which occur as consequences of one's own efforts.

## **Possible selves and self-esteem**

In situations where they facilitate a predominant life task, representations of possible selves reflect the opportunities people perceive to be afforded them by the environment as well as the expectations they have for themselves in those settings. Possible selves vividly represent the potential of the self actually accomplishing hoped for end states or avoiding feared or dreaded ones. They depict not only outcome expectancies and feelings but also personal efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1982), or images and feelings (Cantor et al., 1986, pp.99-100) affected either by personal past experiences or vicarious experiences (Brown and Inouye, 1978; Takata and Takata, 1976). The link between self-efficacy and possible selves is supported by Hooker and Kaus (1994, p. 131) who report that goal oriented activities were the strongest predictors of possible selves regarding health. Assuming that possible selves consist of components of a self-schema, schematic individuals appear to recognise their ability in a given domain. This is in contrast to aschematics. Hence, one's self-esteem seems to be malleable in relation to the possible selves which dominate the working self-concept (Cross and Markus, 1994, p.424). Given this line of argument, possible selves may act as self-fulfilling prophecies. This would be especially indicated in studies regarding social stigma and the consequences of it on one's own behaviour (Crocker and Major, 1989; Crocker et al, 1991; Snyder and Swann, 1978) and where individuals in different experimental situations imagined a certain scenario regarding performance (e.g. Ruvolo and Markus, 1992). When a negative possible self is activated it brings with it associated negative affect, which in turn has a marked impact on subsequent behaviour. This affects self-esteem which is not a stable overall estimation of one's worth as an individual but rather a variable value that is a function of the valences of self-conceptions, which constitute the working self-concept at a given time (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.958). Markus (1980, p.126) explains this, suggesting that the self as least common denominator minimizes inconsistencies, glosses over differences, and helps achieve feelings of self-consistency, which probably produce positive feelings about the self. Changes in the structure of the self-system, in cases where negative possible selves dominate the working self-concept may produce negative feelings about the self or lower one's self-esteem until the self-structures are cognitively reorganised into a new whole.

Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 961) suggest that the concept of possible selves allows us to make a more direct connection between motives and specific actions. Mastery of life tasks (a concept



close to self-esteem) and life situations is linked to theories such as those of Taylor (1983) who describe the need for people to gain a sense of mastery as they adjust to life-threatening events like cancer. Gaining a feeling of control over the event appears vital to successful coping. For example, possible selves like being healthy, are cognitive representations of the incentives for mastery, and without them there would be little instrumental behaviour in the direction of mastery. Close to this idea is what Bandura (1982) called the individual's belief in their self efficacy, i.e. being competent to perform a required behaviour.

The mediating role of the values of a social-cultural context and self-concept on individuals' self-esteem is indicated by studies suggesting that although two groups of individuals (men and women) do not differ on the level of overall self-esteem the basis of their self-esteem may differ (Josephs et al., 1992; Curry et al., 1994). Much of the literature for example indicates that gender provides its own messages and serves as an aspect of every other sociocultural context as well. Men and women from their earliest days receive somewhat different messages about what it means to be a 'good person'. Women learn the value of relationships and of perceiving connections between the self and other (Gilligan, 1982; Markus and Oyserman, 1989; Miller, 1986; Steward and Lykes, 1985). Men are more likely to be encouraged to see themselves as autonomous, separate and not connected to others. Supporting evidence for this idea is found in a recent study undertaken by Josephs et al. (1992) which suggests that self-esteem can be linked to different processes in men and women. For men self esteem is connected with an individuation process in which personal distinguishing achievements are emphasized while women's self-esteem is linked to a process in which connections and attachments to others are emphasized.

### **Possible selves and motivation**

The contribution of the concept of possible selves to more traditional views of motivation is to suggest that some of the dynamic elements of personality may be carried in specific cognitive representations of the self in future states and that one's actions may be shaped by attempts to realise or avoid these states (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p.161). Such studies (e.g. Ruvolo and Markus, 1992) appear to underscore Nuttin's (1984) argument that motivation is not just an instinctual, impersonal unconscious process. Nuttin (1984) particularly emphasised the idea of

personalised motivations and criticised approaches which stressed the instinctual and unconscious nature of human motivation. He argued for the need to personalise motivation and for the value of studying how motivation is transformed into the activity of goal setting and into the concrete intentions and aims of which we are more aware. Schlenker (1985) has also individualised motivation by postulating 'desired selves' that are determined by situational constraints and by the anticipated audience for the behaviour and that process information in the setting (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, p.216). Nurius (1991, p. 242) reports that possible selves provide structural content and form to what Mead (1934) described as one's anticipated future and to the 'I want' dimension of self-reflection. Thus possible selves provide important links for the self-concept to motivation and to goal-directed action. The significance of possible selves is related to their function as incentives for future behaviour and to their ability to provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.955).

Ruvolo and Markus (1992) report that a general desire to do well must be given specific self-relevant form and such individualised translation creates and sustains the motivation. It is specific personalised images and conceptions of desired end-states that may mediate the relation between positive expectancies, high levels of aspiration, optimism, control, self-efficacy, perceived competence and performance. Similarly, it is specific personalised images and conceptions of undesired end-states which explain the relation between low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, low perceived competence and helplessness and poor performance. An interface between motivation and the self-concept is suggested by Ruvolo and Markus (1992, p.121).

Support for the studies focusing on the individualistic motivational power of the possible selves comes from research on traditional dimensions of personality: optimism vs pessimist (Carver, Reynolds and Scheir, 1994) which are related to the motivational framework of the theory of possible selves. People's endeavours to reach desired goals are related to the extent that they are optimistic of being able to reach these goals (Carver and Scheier, 1990). Possible selves deal with individuals' orientation to the future. Carver, Reynolds and Scheier (1994, p. 139) investigating the possible selves of dispositional optimists and pessimists reported that optimism was positively correlated with the positivity of the expected selves reported by individuals but not with the positivity of either hoped for or feared selves. This pattern suggests that pessimists do not lack

high hopes and aspirations for themselves but that the hopes seem not to be translated into expectations which implies that these hopes may be less likely to engage the motivational control systems that cause their realisation in behaviour (Carver and Scheier, 1990). The motivational power of possible selves is indicated in Kato and Markus' (1993, p.82) study regarding whether the effects of possible selves can be determined mainly by cognitive structures or by cognitive and motivational factors. They compared the number of items relating to actual-self, possible selves and semantic judgments recalled by individuals. The motivational power was set beside the cognitive structure of possible selves. It was indicated in an equal number of items in possible self judgment as in actual self judgment, as recalled by participants. The facilitating effect on information processing of possible selves although they are less elaborated than the actual self is attributed to the motivational effects of possible selves.

Cross and Markus (1991, pp.232-233) report that the concept of future selves provides a structure for organising and integrating information relevant to the desired or undesired possible selves. Such formulations may also be assumed to energise behaviour in pursuit of them. Possible selves also contain the means to reach these goals. Knowledge of the means to achieve the goal provides a blueprint for action that allows one to plan, execute and monitor progress toward personal goals. In addition, knowledge of the means may increase one's belief that the goal is attainable (Day et al., 1992, pp. 184-185). A possible self contains both the representation of a given anticipated action or performance and the outcomes that are associated with it. An emphasis on possible selves also allows for integration of a variety of findings related to goal effectiveness. Thus, specific clear goals have been shown to be more effective than vague or general intentions to perform well (Locke, Shaw, Sari & Latham, 1981). Goals that individuals feel to be important, involving, or to which they are committed are effective because these goals are self-relevant and self-defining and as a result the desired end state, even a difficult one, will be easier to form into a unit with the self.

The effectiveness of possible selves where individuals focus on a certain domain instead of dissemination of their attention to many domains, is supported by the work of Carver et al (1994, p.140) concerning the possible selves reported by optimistic and pessimistic individuals. The study indicated that pessimism was associated with spontaneous reports of a wider range of



content domain among hoped for selves which is interpreted in terms of threat which possibly induces pessimists to develop hopes for the future in more diverse realms of their lives, in the hope that not all of these life domains will be threatened at once. In this case it becomes harder to apply oneself in any given area, and it becomes less likely that hopes will successfully evolve into expectations. The main idea of Markus and Ruvolo (1989, p.228) is that those individuals with a clear image, conception or sense of themselves in a future state (e.g. successful on a given task) will have more cues relevant to this future state accessible, and that this will enhance goal related performance. The construction of possible selves allows one to experience a contingency between one's own self and one's imagined or felt future self. The better one is at constructing these possible selves the more vivid and specific they become, and the more one's current state can be made similar to the desired state. The links between the present and past and the self-knowledge associated with the motivational power of well-elaborated representations of selves and proximal and distal goals set off possible selves as a theory of powerful elements for intervention and counselling processes regarding positive changes in ones' life. This is especially relevant in environments where individuals lack a variety of high achieving role-models (e.g. minorities and children of poverty) (Day et al., 1994, p.101) the development of positive possible selves in socially stigmatised groups (Oyserman et al., 1995) and the enhancement of performance of individuals with negative previous experiences or indifference to certain subjects/issues (Lips, 1995).

The main suggestion provided by the theory of possible selves to the discipline of motivation relates to Oyserman and Markus' (1990a, 1990b) suggestion that a given possible self will have maximal motivational effectiveness when it is offset or balanced by the countervailing possible self in the same domain. Desire for the positive goal is an incentive as is the wish to avoid something unpleasant. Visions of oneself in the future are based on roles and social categorisations and on views of particular characteristics. As such, past performances and self-evaluations of competencies are important in the construction of multiple, well articulated visions of positive selves. A vivid representation of one's self in a relevant positive and desired manner can be used to counter the representation of the self in an undesired state and to prevent the inaction ('paralysis') that occurs when a dreaded possible self dominates the working self-concept. Without a positive possible self to provide an outline of a desired state that can be

realised if the feared possible self is avoided, one's actions will be disorganised or subject to control by a variety of external or situational factors that will remove attention from the feared possible self (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989 pp.223-224). Kato and Markus (1993, p.82), who studied the features of possible selves which affected the cognitive process of individuals' recall of actual and possible self judgments support the motivational power of negative possible selves. They found that when individuals who felt greater future fear in a given domain made possible self judgments on personality adjectives or daily event items, they tended to recall more negative content items and less positive content items than those who did not feel the necessity for change and who did not have any fear of the future. A future fear would seem to function as a signal which will presumably trigger self adjustment to the world's demands or changes. They also suggested that positive content information does not have as informative a value as negative content information, because it can be seen as less likely to inform individuals of the time when they should adaptively modify their behaviours according to external demands or changes. The motivating role of negative possible selves is also supported by findings from a study regarding domination of health related possible selves (Hooker and Kaus, 1994, p.130) in the adult life span. The data addressing the frequency of possible selves in the realm of health strongly indicate that feared selves are more salient than hoped for selves, for both young and middle-aged adults. Nurius (1991, pp.253-254) however challenges the assumption that possible selves are necessarily bipolar in nature since the social environment does not always offer balanced models and in many cases dreaded or undesirable possible selves are not only expected but also highly likely possible selves.

Oyserman and Saltz (1993) studying the impact of impulsivity, possible selves and communication skills on delinquent involvement in inner-city high schools and incarcerated boys found that 'officially' delinquent youths were less likely to have balanced possible selves. They could not extricate themselves from problematic situations involving their peers and went along with whatever opportunities arose rather than actively seeking opportunities for attaining self-relevant goals. Theft and vandalism were not lone activities but social events that took place in the company of others, hence the youth's competence in interacting with these others was critical (Oyserman and Saltz, 1993, pp.360, 372-373). The more one's feared and hoped-for possible selves have been individually crafted to offset each other, the more motivational control one can

gain in a given domain (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, p.224). The theory implies that individuals with a balance between their feared and their expected selves in a given domain will have more control over their behaviour in this domain because they will have more varied motivational resources available to them than will individuals without such balance. Such a dynamic balance between one's expected and one's feared selves in a given domain creates a more intense and a more directed motivational state than either an expected possible self or a feared possible self alone. The study seems to raise questions regarding the nature of possible selves (positive or negative) reported by individuals as expected. It also questions whether ideal positive possible selves are likely to become real in terms of the nature of the self schemata dominating one's working self-concept. Support for the motivational power of paired possible selves comes from the study carried out by Oyserman et al. (1995, p.1228) regarding the school persistence of African-American students. They identified that balance in possible selves had a positive effect on school performance, especially for males. The effects of balance were consistent across subjective as well as objective measures of school persistence and achievement. As a further step, since males were particularly at risk for dropping out and delinquent involvement, the researchers suggest that if one can change the way males conceptualise what is possible for them in the future, an enhancement of school performance and persistence may follow. The study also indicated that differences in achievement, between White and African-Americans were related to the different number of balanced selves they reported, with African-American students having fewer such balanced achievement related pairs of possible selves (p.1221).

Markus and Nurius (1987) make the reservation that, although their approach to link possible selves with actions is concerned with information that is available to consciousness or to working memory this view does not deny the potential behavioural effects of uncommunicated desires and needs nor does it ignore the influence of a diversity of social structural factors in producing behaviour.

*Possible selves and emotion:* The role of emotion is also of crucial importance for the motivational dimension of possible selves. Possible selves and self-cognitions are related to specific self-feelings or affect. Each identity or self-conception has a particular affect attached to it. This is related to possible selves, since when a negative possible self is activated it brings with it the



associated negative affect, which in turn has a marked impact on the form and content of subsequent behaviour (Bower, 1981). This affects self-esteem which fluctuates according to the self-conception dominating the working self-concept at a given time.

Affect derives from conflicts or discrepancies within the self-concept. To the extent that individuals can or cannot achieve particular self-conceptions or identities they will feel either positively or negatively about themselves (Markus and Nurius, 1986, pp. 957-958). When certain current self-conceptions are challenged or supported, it is often the nature of the activated possible selves that determines how the individual feels and what course the subsequent action will take (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.961).

### **Possible selves and social intelligence**

Individuals keep knowledge of their personal pasts, think creatively about their personal futures, and work in their thoughts and in their actions to gain control in their everyday lives. This is related to social intelligence, facilitating a break with the past and providing a thrust to the future via imaginative self-reflection and goal setting. Cognition becomes a tool for articulating, representing, and solidifying personal motivation in particular life settings and life periods. In this context the theory of possible selves represents the individual's goals, while simultaneously giving force and life to those goals via the impact of imaginative thought on affect and on cognition (Klinger, 1989). Social intelligence seems to be related to possible selves in terms of the mediating role of core and peripheral cognitive schemata which dominate one's functional self-concept which in turn affects development of one's capacity to creatively develop and search for alternative solutions to a problem, and the inclination to frame problems or goals in additive and constructive terms (Brower and Nurius, 1993, p.174) which lead to certain patterns of behaviour.

Oyserman and Saltz (1993, p.361) in their study concerning delinquency and social competence in adolescents, report the connection between possible selves and social intelligence in terms of feedback provided by partners in the identity negotiation process. Expectations and the feedback of negotiation partners have an important effect on the sense of self being developed (Wiley and Alexander, 1987). It has been argued that success in this negotiation process depends critically on one's ability to translate desired identities into the possibilities afforded by the social environment

(Cantor, Mitchel, & Schwartz, 1982). This ability is termed social intelligence or competence (Cantor and Kihlstrom, 1987), which involves one's ability 'to negotiate socially responsible and feasible ways to do both what one wants and what is needed in a current situation' (Cantor and Zirkel, 1990, p.158).

### **Possible selves, self-schemas and social context**

According to Cantor et al. (1986, p.99) people are assumed to have a diverse repertoire of possible selves that can be viewed as the cognitive manifestations of their enduring goals, aspirations, values, motives and threats. The pool of possible selves derives from the categories made salient by the individual's sociocultural and historical context and from models, significant others, images and symbols provided by the media and by the individual's immediate social experiences. Social norms and mores and the possibilities encapsulated in the roles played by others in one's social environment are likely to indicate certain representations of the self/selves others would like him/her to become (Oyserman and Markus, 1990a; Oyserman and Saltz, 1993, p.361). These possible or 'ought' selves include prescriptions for things the individual ought or ought not to be or to become (Higgins, Klain & Strauman, 1985; Cantor et al., 1986, p.99). Possible selves thus have the potential to reveal the intensive and constructive nature of the self, but they also reflect the extent to which the self is socially determined and constrained (Elder, 1980; Markus and Ruvolo, 1989, pp.217-218).

Given the social nature of the self, it is likely that only those selves that others validate as possible will become part of one's identity. Hence, the plausibility of particular possible selves or desired selves may be thought of as the outcome of interpersonal interactions in which these selves are negotiated (Cantor and Zirkel, 1990; Oyserman and Saltz, 1993, p.361). Oyserman et al. (1995, p. 1228-1229) in a study relating to the school persistence of African-American students reported that gendered African-American identity schemas are central for school persistence. According to the researchers, these schemas are viewed as the scaffolding within which balanced possible selves in the achievement domain are generated and strategies for their attainment sketched out. Gendered African-American identity schemas, are likely to also have a more direct impact on one's subjective sense of what is probable and plausible for the self (Markus, 1977). As such these gendered identities seem to be the lenses or prisms through which adolescents make sense of the

world. The links between gender, social context and behaviour can be understood in terms of one scanning his/her everyday social contexts within the vocabulary of his/her emerging identity. As such, current action is scripted by what is viewed as a good, important and plausible outcome within one's context.

Cantor and Zirkel (1990, pp.140-141) identify the role of culture as the context in which personality is observed, without which behaviour has no meaning without meaning behaviour has no purpose. They emphasize that the cultural context provides important information for making judgments about constructs like 'social structure' and 'social adjustment'. In these terms general processes creating relationships between personality and goal-directed behaviour, adjustment and adaptation to important life changes (e.g. divorce) can best be studied with detailed knowledge of the specific contexts in which these relationships unfold over the life-span. Thus behaviour is thought to be created by a person in a particular context, and it is not necessarily expected to hold for other times and other contexts. Schlenker and Weigold (1989) report that people are seen to negotiate an identity that is consistent both with desired images of the self and with situational goals and demands. Individuals work toward achieving possible selves that account both for self-schemas and for the particular demands likely to be encountered (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

Empirical evidence of individuals' appraisal of the social context emerges from Frable's work on stigmatisation (Frable et al., 1990) which indicates group membership as a basis for self-definition which implies the role of a certain social environment on deviant people's behaviour. Participants in the study were classified as fat people, gays, lesbians, ethnic groups, and rape and incest survivors. With regard to self processes, her work suggests that people who have a concealable stigma have a more dispositional view of self and view themselves as more unique, even on dimensions irrelevant to their stigma, than do those who are not stigmatised or whose behaviour is conspicuous (e.g. fat). Both positive and negative deviants were likely to be mindful in their initial contacts with strangers. She suggests that making friends is particularly stressful and unpredictable for marginal people and mindfulness gives them a control on social exchange by reacting to each successive stage of social interaction.

Similarly, Skinner (1988) and George Herbert Mead (cited in Deaux, 1992) note that no



distinction can be made between social and personal identity. Deaux (1992, p.17) acknowledges that personal meanings are constructed in and dependent on the social context. Thus one's personal identity cannot be separated from the social context in which it develops. Breakwell (1986, p.17) points out that personal identity could be considered as the relatively permanent residue of each assimilation to and accommodation of a social identity. These theories follow Showers and Cantor's (1985, p.280) suggestion that individuals construct interpretations according to the structures embedded in a situation. The theory of social perception is guided by opportunities for action in the environment (McArthur and Baron, 1983) and much of the literature indicates that the norms and standards for judgment in different settings affect the way people evaluate themselves and others (Carlston, 1980; Higgins and Lurie, 1983). Nurius (1991, p. 254) points out that the self-system shapes and personalises motivation. Yet the social and cultural environment shapes the self, including what conceptions of possibility the person will likely embrace or construct as well as how these conceptions are made salient, affirmed, and elaborated in the context of social interactions. To a great extent, the social environment determines the opportunity and support structure for individual adaptation and change, and provides the models, images and symbols for framing these end states and efforts. Nurius also suggests that "who we are" is contingent upon our roles, relationships, and the reflected appraisals of credible and valued others, so too are our conceptions of our possible selves- both positive and negative. On this line of thinking Oyserman and Markus (1993, p. 192) suggest that one makes sense of him/herself in terms of the characteristics valued by the immediate environments in which one lives. The self-concept then can be considered a locus of socio-cultural influence. It receives and organizes the diverse messages that are communicated by one's various contexts. These messages concern what matters in the world and more generally, how to be an appropriate or valued member within a given context (Kirkpatrick and White, 1985; Shweder, 1990). The self that integrates and personalizes these various messages functions as an orienting, mediating and interpretative framework giving shape to what people are motivated to do, how they feel, what they notice and think about, as well as their overt actions (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Shweder and Miller, 1991). Oyserman and Markus (1993, p. 202) also suggest that individuals embedded in contexts that provide conflicting, contradictory or negative messages must struggle to find a balance between the negative selves thrust upon them and the positive senses of self they would like to create. Pamberton (1992) has recently described this identity work for Afro-Americans and

argues that confronting the meanings that others provide can be a full time task, leaving little room for self-constructed individuality.

Nurius (1991, pp.246-247) reports that possible selves reflect ways in which the self is socially determined and constrained. The parameters for the possible selves one will contemplate, develop, and maintain depend greatly on the nature of one's social environment. This could include cultural and social identity variables as well as social structural constraints and opportunities. Individuals in one's social environment, provide information on what attributes, roles and abilities are valued and also set evaluation standards regarding the extent to which individuals possess any given attribute. The more consistent and the longer the duration of such social evaluations, the more likely an individual is to adopt others' perspectives on the self and to incorporate this conception into his/her decision making, coping and striving behaviours. According to this line of thought Curry et al. (1994), who studied the effects of life domains on girls' (in their late adolescence) possible selves, reported that females underrepresentation in the higher status jobs relates to a different set of cognitions and a wider range of life domains that they consider, the dual responsibility of having a career and maintaining the home and family (Curry and McEwen, 1989), than do similarly qualified boys. It became apparent that the possible selves they reported regarding family and career were mainly influenced by the social environment to which they belonged (their mother's experiences, traditional gender identity implying their commitment to family rather than career and the peripheral importance of paid work). Also, Josephs et al. (1992) reported that women are more likely to have a sociocentric or connected self schema in which relationships with other people are crucial and are included within the self, while men are relatively more likely to have an individualistic separate schema with 'other' distinct from self. Similar to these findings are those from the study conducted by Oyserman, Gant and Ager (1995, p.1229). They investigated the school performance of African-American students in relation to possible selves focused on current and plausible future self descriptors. Though females were more likely to have balanced possible selves in the achievement domain, having these selves was especially advantageous for males. This was related to the content of their identity. For females, viewing achievement as part of a socially contextualised identity improved performance. For males, it is the ability to visualise the self as achieving or failing to achieve that is particularly motivating. In terms of links between possible selves and social representations of selves,

Oyserman, Gant and Ager (1995), propose a socially contextualised model of the self. The authors suggest that achievement should be conceptualised and occurring within the context of being African-American. It was indicated that achievement related possible selves were mediated by endorsement of individualism for White Americans but of collectiveness for African-Americans. These dominated the strategies they used to approach these possible selves. This suggests the mediation of one's representations of selves by elements of their identity related to a certain social group.

To conclude, the theory of possible selves is based on the idea of personalised motivation which challenges the unitary dimension claimed by the literature concerning notions of self-concept and self-esteem. Possible selves offer an innovative way of theorising about the relationship between personality and motivation linking the notions of self-schemas, self-concept, working self-concept, self-esteem and social intelligence. The theory also provides a means of linking these notions and the social factors which mediate their function and form. Possible selves seem to open new paths for the study of these concepts and also provide an optimistic way to approach the study of individuals with low scores on overall measures of self-esteem and self-concept by recognising that one's self-schemata are developed in relation to previous relevant experiences and present emotional states. Overall, theories of possible selves are important because possible selves can act as incentives for future behaviour and second, because they provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self. However, the theory seems to lack detailed description of the way that possible selves are embedded within the social environment and how this mediates their development.



## CHAPTER 4

### DIVORCE AND POSSIBLE SELVES

There is only one study which considers the effects of divorce on the nature of adolescent possible selves, marital expectations and self-reported problems (Carson, Madison, Santrock, 1987). The participants were 48 adolescent (13-15 years old) females and males and their mothers from middle and upper-middle class intact and divorced families. Participants were interviewed and questionnaires were also administered.

Mothers completed a *Demographic Questionnaire* which provided background demographic information concerning their families. Adolescents completed an *Ages Questionnaire* which was modified from that employed by Cottle and Klineberg (1974). They also filled out a *Possible Future Marital Selves Questionnaire* and a *Problems Questionnaire*. In the *Possible Selves Questionnaire*, using Likert scales identical to those in the problems questionnaire, adolescents reported levels of agreement with a number of statements related to marital expectations. The *Problems Questionnaire* (9-point Likert scales), consisted of 14 items relating to current problems reported by adolescents e.g. eating disorders, disobedience, being secretive, not being liked, worrying, being perfect and lonely. Qualitative data was derived by asking each participant to describe 'the perfect person' for him or her to marry (*Adolescent Interview Question*). Open ended questions were also asked about their ideal marriage partner. Answers were coded along five dimensions: image maintenance, traditional values, screening, fair contribution, and elaborated phantasy.

The findings demonstrated that family status (divorced-intact) appeared to have little direct effect on either adolescent possible selves and related expectations or adolescents' reports of problems. Adolescents from divorced and intact families were found to differ in the anticipated age of marriage, with divorced family adolescents anticipating later marriage, and predicting an earlier age of divorce than adolescents from intact families. In relation to career, females expected to begin full-time jobs at an earlier age than did male adolescents. Females also reported having more problems with overeating than males. Yet, overall, there were few clear links between family status, gender, adolescent expectations, possible selves and reports of problems. The study

indicated only weak evidence supporting its hypotheses that there would be differences in the possible selves of adolescents from divorced and intact families and in their expectations and reports of problems.

What was more interesting, were the differences between divorced and intact family adolescents in the relationships between possible selves/expectation variables and problems. The adolescents from divorced and intact families seemed to engage in different styles of linking possible selves and expectations of problems; perhaps possible selves mediate the relationships between family status and adolescent reports of problems. For example, where adolescents from divorced and intact families differed significantly in the correlations between possible selves and problem variables, there were twice as many significant correlations in the divorced group than in the intact group. This suggests that following a stressful life-event, such as divorce, possible selves may play an important role mediating, even exacerbating, the effects of the stressful event on ongoing behaviour. Specifically, the correlations between possible selves and problem variables suggest that if possible future selves are markedly more 'pessimistic' the impact is much greater on the problems experienced.

The common themes which linked the possible selves to problems appeared to fall into two broad categories: *contact versus isolation and perfection versus imperfection*. Regarding *contact versus isolation*, it was found that adolescents from divorced families appeared to associate self-evaluated excessive secretiveness with pessimism related to possible future marital selves. This may suggest that adolescents from divorced families assume that lack of honesty and open communication between spouses detracts from the quality of the marriage to a greater extent than do adolescents from intact families. Adolescents from divorced families were also more prone to link self-evaluated secrecy to the extent to which they described an ideal marital partner as holding traditional values and contributing fairly to the relationship. The researchers suggested that it was almost as if the 'secretive' divorced family adolescents carried knowledge of how fragile they anticipated their close relationships to be, as if they wanted to be especially certain that their future spouse would remain loyal, committed and supportive. This seems to imply that such an adolescent might more willingly sacrifice intimacy and oneness if this would increase security and stability. This was not the case for adolescents from intact families. However, this seems to create

a dilemma for divorcees' offspring since they may also sense that in sacrificing oneness they run the risk of failing to maintain the affective quality of a relationship with a spouse or potential spouse. In addition, research showed that the relationship between a sense of a lack of love and the tendency to imagine elaborate fantasies of wonderful ideal marital partners was stronger among divorced than intact family adolescents. A sense of deficiency of love (feeling unloved) was also associated among adolescents from divorced families with postponement of the expected age of marriage, as if these adolescents were wary of entry into an emotionally deficient marital state. The picture of one type of adolescent from a divorced family is completed by reports of not being liked by others and of being lonely. This individual feels secretive, lonely, unloved, and/or unpopular. The future holds little expectation of increased intimacy or connectedness. The research suggests that it is in many ways a picture of an individual retreating from present relationships, and fantasising about idealized future relationships which become ever less plausible as time goes on.

Regarding *perfection versus imperfection*, the adolescents' need to be 'perfect', as well as excessive concern with imperfections in oneself and particularly one's physical appearance, fall into the category perfection-imperfection. Self-reported eating problems (these individuals were often quite concerned with their physical appearance) were more strongly linked to pessimistic possible selves among divorced than intact family adolescents. Divorced family adolescents reporting eating problems were also more likely than their intact family counterparts to report highly elaborated descriptions of their ideal marriage partner. The researchers suggest that "this seemingly paradoxical situation (eating problems associated with both negative evaluations of one's possible marital selves and increased effort in developing well-elaborated ideal spouses) seems analogous to that of the potential self-defeating behaviours of the excessively 'secretive' divorced family adolescents" (Carson et al., 1987, p. 202).

This study suggests that possible selves may mediate the effects of stressful life events. The role of cognitive processes and self-schemas in motivating one's future behaviour revealed by this study indicate they may be a crucial factor for understanding the so called intergenerational transmission of parental divorce. Further research on this issue is indicated as it may contribute to our understanding of family life as experienced by a high percentage of divorcees' offspring.



There are also limitations to the study. The sample is relatively small and the individuals are from middle and upper-middle-class homes. The exact relationships between possible selves and the experiences of parental divorce, the age of participants when the divorce occurred are not identified. Although the researchers report developmental strengths, regarding biological and cognitive maturity, for this age range (adolescence) which allows individuals to engage in more elaborated fantasies and other imaginative activities (Elkind, 1967) one might question the extent to which they can predict. Also, the time the information was selected, one year after the parental divorce, could be perceived as a period of adjustment for some of them who may still have been overwhelmed by the event. The literature suggests one year as the mean time interval for individuals to adjust to a stressful life event (Johnson, 1986). Consequently, the data emerging from the study may be negatively exaggerated by the emotional state of the participants. In addition, the context surrounding the separation and divorce of parents was not investigated, although the lasting effects of the history of the actual events making up the parental divorce may well influence the formation of both possible selves and the onset of adolescent problems, as well as the nature of the possible selves and the problems.

The findings of the studies, presented so far, on the effects of divorce tend to be contradictory. It is likely that they are mediated by a range of factors e.g. divorce circumstances, individual's gender, educational level. There has been little research with young adults. Only few studies take account of cultural/societal factors on the effects of divorce. Possible selves may act as mediating factors.

The present study aims (a) to identify the role of cultural/societal factors as mediating factors in the effects of representations of selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding future personal relationships/family life, occupational life, friendships and leisure, (b) to focus on young adults who are at a stage in their life where they have established a degree of independence from their parents and are taking responsibility for their futures (Super, 1965) (c ) to consider gender differences, the role of the educational level of individuals, marital status and also the father's educational level for the illumination of the intergenerational transmission of parental divorce (d) to identify the divorce circumstances affecting possible selves concerning family life and relationships, friendships, occupational life and leisure.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The aims of this research are to explore cross cultural differences in the possible selves of young adults, male and female from divorced and intact families, taking account of the circumstances of the divorce.

The relative lack of studies focusing on the long-term effects of divorce on divorcees' offspring may to some extent reflect the difficulties of undertaking research in this area. Firstly, it is a sensitive area. Secondly, accessing a sample of people of the appropriate age who are willing to be involved may present difficulties. Thirdly, while undertaking qualitative research may offer the richest data and the prospect of gaining deeper understanding of the issues, analysis of qualitative data from a large sample is time consuming.

Making a decision regarding the most appropriate methodology for this study proved to be a difficult task since the questions to be raised are personal and were to be studied retrospectively. Few methodological options presented themselves. The most appropriate seemed to be: interviews, case studies or questionnaires. The first issue in selecting the methodology was the need for the research to reveal and provide detailed information about possible selves and divorce circumstances as there was a lack of previous work in this field. Exploratory interviews might provide such information and guide further research in relation to both the data to be collected and the procedures to be followed. After this initial exploration, case studies or a survey might be appropriate.

The adoption of a case study approach would enable a detailed account of the divorce situation to emerge and would contribute to an in depth analysis of the role of parental divorce on future behaviours and actions adopted by divorcees' offspring regarding future family plans, friendships, occupational life and leisure preferences. While case studies were perhaps the best methodological approach to explore this issue since the information to be collected was personal and perhaps emotionally charged, the researcher had no access to institutions and organisations for divorcees' offspring which might provide appropriate cases. In addition, it was felt important to select a

sample from the general population rather than a clinical one Confidentiality and ethical commitment to individuals was also an issue. Furthermore, there was the difficulty that in adopting a longitudinal case study there would be wastage as students or other young adults moved away from the area.

An alternative methodological option was to undertake exploratory interviews (as a first step) which would provide information to enable detailed questionnaires (survey) to be devised. These would explore trends in representations of selves which would discriminate individuals from divorced families from their counterparts from intact families. These techniques seemed more appropriate than an exhaustive study of specific cases for both practical and academic reasons. The use of questionnaires would also allow greater freedom to deal with emotional issues arising from the questions raised than in face to face interviews. Case studies would demand participants' deep involvement in the study over a long period of time possibly boding to emotional involvement and distress as the divorce and the feelings around it were discussed. The anonymity and the impersonalised way of extracting information was expected to allow respondents to express themselves easily and the researcher would possibly avoid coping with cases which should be treated by an experienced clinical or counselling psychologist.

The advantages of a survey methodology was that it would enable data to be collected from a larger sample. This was particularly important given the aim to explore gender and cross cultural differences. The questions of the survey were to be derived from exploratory interviews.

The following research methodology was adopted:

- exploratory interviews
- questionnaires devised on the basis of the information emerging from the interviews.

### **Methodological issues regarding exploratory interviews**

There is relatively little research addressing the issues of divorce and possible selves. Further, there is little research which focuses on these issues in young adults age 25 to 35 years. This life period is reported in the relevant literature as a crucial time in the establishment of adulthood (Super, 1965). A semi-structured interview schedule was selected to explore these questions as



it would give participants the chance to describe in depth the divorce situation and report their 'possible selves' in relation to family, friendships, career-occupation and leisure, the areas of focus of the study. The interview provides a virtually unique technique which opens up what lies behind participants' action (Cohen and Manion, 1985). The researcher's decision was influenced by the following methodological issues emerging from the literature.

Face to face interviews offer the possibility of modifying the primary line of enquiry set by the researcher, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives (Robson, 1993, p.229). This purpose of interviews is supported by Tuckman (1972) who argues that interviewing provides access to one's attitudes and beliefs, values and preferences and gives the researcher the possibility to 'measure' what a person knows. Kerlinger (1970) identifies the use of interviews as a tool with which to validate other methods. Cohen and Manion (1986, p.293) note the use of interviews as a proper tool for a researcher to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. This is the main purpose of the interviews undertaken in this study, to suggest material to develop a questionnaire and also to support retrospectively the findings from the questionnaires offering deeper insights into individuals' answers.

The questions used in the interview were open-ended since the researcher's aim was to obtain preliminary information in an area about which very little is known. Open-ended questions are flexible and allow the interviewer to probe so that s/he may go into more depth if necessary, or clear up possible misunderstandings. Since the issue was sensitive and very personal, open-ended questions were expected to encourage cooperation and help establish rapport. Open-ended questions were also expected to result in unexpected or unanticipated answers which would suggest hitherto unthought-of relationships or hypotheses which would be extremely valuable for the purpose of the current study.

The interviews were designed to be exploratory as the hypothetico-deductive model of research can be misleading, as information may be excluded in advance because of a lack of awareness. The hypothetico-deductive model suggests that in order to test a hypothesis, the researcher has to already know what s/he is going to discover, which is not the case here. The research, being

exploratory, explicitly departs from certain structures of the hypothetico-deductive model (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p.17).

It was decided that semi-structured interviews would be undertaken with two different groups: individuals from intact families (control group) and individuals from divorced families. Information was to be gathered about the divorce from individuals from divorced families; and concerning how participants from divorced and intact families view themselves (representations of selves) in the future with regard to those aspects of life the study focuses on (future family, friendships, occupational life, leisure). This would enable a comparison between the possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring with those reported by individuals from intact families. This was expected to identify the 'key' possible selves that chiefly distinguish the two groups. The literature review provided the requisite background information for framing the interview questions about possible selves and divorce. (The entire interview schedule is presented in Appendix A. Modifications to the interview questions are discussed in the pilot study).

No additional source of information (e.g. relatives or other family members), was used to gather information about the divorce since the study focused on the individual's perspective. This decision was taken because findings obtained from studies focusing on life-events suggest that individual responses to life-events differ since each individual perceives or constructs the reality in his/her mind on the basis of previous experiences and their present emotional state (Worrall et. al, 1989). Research on stress and coping suggests that individuals' responses to stressful events may be influenced by their interpretations and appraisals of the event (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

When the interviews were completed and the transcription of the tapes was completed, the analysis of the data began by a thorough reading of the transcription sheets. Two coders were employed for the coding of the information emerging from the interviews (the researcher and a psychologist). The process followed was that established by Cooper and McIntyre (1993, p.384): Reading a random sample of transcripts, identifying points of similarity and difference among these transcripts in relation to the research questions, theorising about the information, finding links between the information emerging from the previous stage of analysis. These 'theories' were

then tested against a new set of transcripts. In addition, the new 'theories' which emerged from a new set of transcripts were tested against transcripts already dealt with. At the end, all the existing 'theories' were carried forward to new transcripts. The above processes were repeated until all data had been examined and all 'theories' tested against all data.

The codes derived were used as organising devices that allowed the researcher to find and then collect together all instances of a particular kind. A second level or pattern coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was employed which grouped sentences into a small number of themes or patterns.

Names were given to the categories which were constructed. The categories were given operational definitions according to the information provided by the interviewees. The overall categorisation was carried out on the basis of the aspects of life on which the study focused (family, friendship, occupation, leisure).

The analysis and coding of the interview data were carried out as follows:

- the information which emerged from the interviews was reported in summary form on a single sheet.
- a first code was given to the basic points, in order to remind the researcher of their referent. The naming of the categories began at the beginning of the coding and continued throughout the process as new information and elaboration of data often indicated a new 'theory', which integrated and described the data better than the previous one. The codes were kept short, for practical reasons. The codes were developed according to the information which emerged from the participants' answers
- the process of analysing the data and coding the information started with a small number of potential patterns. These were modified and enriched during the course of the analysis.
- the analysis considered individual statements, since the aim was to explore all the information reported by the interviewees. The decisions about exact categorisation of statements were difficult and time-consuming. However, as the researchers became more sensitive to the coding and the information, the decision process became easier.



A series of subcategories were developed in many cases, in order for the data to be organised and described more clearly.

### Reliability:

The issues of reliability and validity are of particular concern in relation to qualitative research particularly in relation to how categories are conceptualised. Krippendorff (1980, p.130-154) and Weber (1990) discuss stability and reproducibility. Stability refers to the extent to which the results of content classification are invariant over time. The second kind of reliability is related to reproducibility or intercoder reliability. This refers to the extent to which content classification produces the same results when the same text is coded by more than one coder. The study makes no claims for stability but the transcripts were read and coded by a second coder (psychologist) to establish that the definitions of the categories were clearly formulated. Discrepancies in coding were not indicated. Where individual statements could not be agreed upon they were not included in the analysis.

### Validity:

In qualitative research one could argue that validity supports reliability. Where one puts forward clear well-defined codings this should increase reliability (intercoder reliability) and validity. Validity for this study can be claimed on the basis of a number of factors:

1. Participants were volunteers. Since the issue was sensitive and not everyone may have felt comfortable discussing it, the selection of informants on a voluntary basis was expected to discourage possible misleading responses that might arise from defensiveness
2. Asking for explanations and justifications for answers regarding representations of themselves in the future functioned as a safeguard against 'possible selves' being 'dreams'
3. Each interview was carried out in the form of a dialogue (Marton, 1993), in order for the interviewee to help the interviewer to achieve the conceptualisation required to understand the information provided by him/her. Consequently, accuracy of the presentation of the information offered by the interviewee emerged through the eyes of the individual concerned. Where responses were unclear they were discussed. This leads to greater accuracy of meaning and provides validity since the interviewee is given the opportunity of agreeing the interviewer's record of his/her conceptions either during the interview or later (Francis, 1993, p.72). The researcher arranged

meetings with the interviewees after the interview in order to validate the categorisation and thematisation of the interview information. Exact expressions, ambiguous points and contradictions were presented to the participants to be clarified. This sometimes introduced new information and dictated restructuring of the primary information and categorisation.

### **Sampling issues**

The focus of the study was young adults. Young adults, mature, full and part time students, made up the sample. Individuals attended for interviews on a voluntary basis. They came either from the University or from a social circle connected to the University where the researcher or the interviewees were based. This sample was expected to provide relevant information for all the life domains falling in the context of the present study for the following reasons:

- University students undertaking postgraduate degrees have established independence from their parents and developed other meaningful interpersonal relationships (Greenberg and Nay, 1982). At this age, individuals begin to cope with major life decisions regarding relationships possibly leading to marriage.
- Career-occupation is a central concern for postgraduate students as they are about to make decisions about their future occupation.
- Regarding friendships the University environment or their job placement are highly likely to make them drift away from old friends and to make new ones. Different patterns of friendship and contact with friends were expected to be found.
- University students have a range of leisure activities which may be more or less important to them.
- Postgraduate students, were expected to be more sympathetic to research than people outside the University environment.
- Postgraduate students were expected to be receptive and able to introspect easily given the similar demands made of them in their own studies.
- The sample was from a normal, not a clinical population.

This particular age group was selected because:

- They were expected to be aware of their priorities and the life choices to be made. This should strengthen the validity of the information provided.

- The theory of possible selves itself sets age constraints. These have to be taken into account since the participants need to be able to give reality-based information about themselves, not mere fantasies about their possible futures. (This is a problem often faced by researchers who work with children). Since individuals were asked whether or not they would like to contribute to this study by giving information about themselves, it was supposed that there would be little possibility of socially desirable answers or false information, that could 'contaminate' the information they offered.
- Few studies have focused on the long-term effects of parental divorce (Billingham et al. 1989). Studying young adults will fill a gap in the literature.

The sample was also to include males and females since gender differences were indicated by the majority of studies relating to both short-term and long-term effects (Exeter study, 1994).

### **Pilot study exploratory interviews**

Two males and two females aged (25-35) were interviewed, one each from divorced and intact families/ Greek and English. A convenience sample was used from the circle of the researcher's acquaintances and from people who wished to be involved since they found the research issue interesting. The arrangement was made on the understanding that the researcher would provide information about the findings of the study.

### **Sample for the interviews**

Twenty-four individuals were interviewed, twelve from divorced families (six females and six males) and twelve from intact families (six males and six females). All the individuals were volunteers. They came from Greek and UK families. The sample mainly consisted of University postgraduate students aged 25-35. All of them were either engaged in postgraduate study or had almost finished their first degree. A few were already employed having completed their education. The age at which participants reported their parents being divorced varied from person to person. The sample included individuals whose parents had completed the legal part of the divorce process and also those whose parents were separated and had filed for divorce but where the legal process was continuing. The criterion for inclusion was the parents' final-permanent separation and the commencement of the legal process that would lead to divorce.



## **Pilot study**

Before the interviews proper were undertaken, four pilot interviews were carried out in order to establish the appropriateness of the questions, and explore any areas of difficulty.

**Aims:**

The aims of the pilot study were:

- to check that the questions could be understood by the interviewees
- to check that the questions were explicit
- to verify whether the order in which the questions were asked was appropriate to enable the information to flow easily from the participants
- to provide new information about possible selves, pre-divorce and post divorce patterns of life in order to map out the research area.
- to develop new questions if necessary on the basis of new information raised by the participants
- to allow the researcher to gain experience in undertaking this kind of interview

## **Procedure**

The interviews were semi-structured. The interviewer focused the interview process on the basis of the planned questions. Questions were generated as necessary to clarify and pursue issues raised during the interviews. The interviewer allowed the participants to elaborate their thoughts and feelings since the interview data would provide the basis for the final interview schedule. Each interview lasted about one hour. The location for the interviews was decided by the interviewee. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. The questions the interviewer asked were explained to the interviewee on request. Periods of silence were allowed during the interview process in order for the individual to have time to think. No time limits were set for individuals to answer the questions, since the aim of the pilot study was to gain as much relevant information as possible, and the issue of the interview was very sensitive. The researcher began with questions regarding possible selves, since these questions were felt to be less sensitive than those concerning parental divorce issues. The questions about possible selves are set out in Table 1.

Interview schedule:

Table 1: Questions concerning possible selves.

<p>The questions about possible selves:</p> <p>How do you see yourself in the future?</p> <p>What do you hope for in the future in relation to the following situations?</p> <p>family-love affairs</p> <p>friendships</p> <p>career-occupation</p> <p>leisure</p> <p>What are you afraid of in relation to the following situations?</p> <p>family-love affairs</p> <p>friendships</p> <p>career-occupation</p> <p>leisure</p> <p>Which one of the above "possible selves" is most possible for you?</p> <p>Which one of these "possible selves" is most important to you?</p> <p>How capable do you feel of accomplishing the things you want to achieve?</p> <p>How likely is it that each one of these possible selves will be achieved?</p> <p>What have you done in order to make these possible selves come true?</p> <p>How much would you like these possible selves to be achieved in the future?</p> <p>Are you satisfied with what you have done so far with regard to each one of the areas of your life we are talking about?</p> <p>How do you see yourself in the future? Being happy with what you described above or not?</p> <p>What's the worst thing that could happen to you?</p>
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Table 2: Springboard questions concerning parental divorce.

<p>Divorce scenario (questions addressed to individuals from divorced families)</p> <p>At the beginning of this section, about family-divorce, an introductory question was put to the participant:</p> <p>‘I am interested in obtaining some information regarding your life with your parents. You mentioned to me that your parents decided at some point to live separately and they become divorced. Can you remember the situation of your parents’ separation and how you became aware of it? How did you feel at the time?</p> <p>This question was expected to elicit information which would shape the rest of the interview.</p>
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The questions about divorce were retained unchanged in the main interviews and are reported in detail in the exploratory interviews section (Appendix A). They were retained in the original form because the nature of the questions included allowed individuals to feel free to report their own family situation. No general questions regarding family functioning were asked because of the focus on the circumstances of parental divorce. Individuals from intact families made up the control group. They were assured to be a homogeneous group regardless of family functioning in relation to the transmission of marital instability. This concerns communication of values regarding romanticism, marriage and divorce from parents to child. In the case of children from divorced families, a disinhibitory effect of parental modelling on children's attitudes towards divorce has been suggested (e.g. Kulka and Weingarten, 1979; Greenberg and Nay, 1982). According to this, children from divorced families might view divorce as a more viable option to terminate a dysfunctional marriage than a child coming from an intact family, regardless of the family function. This is illustrated by cases of individuals from unhappy, conflict ridden homes. Children of such homes are more likely to cling to an unsatisfactory marriage in accordance with their parental role model than those from divorced homes (Greenberg and Nay, 1982, p. 344).

### **Outcomes of the pilot study.**

The pilot interviews demonstrated that the interview schedule was appropriate, with some minor changes. Some questions needed elaboration in order for the researcher to elicit all necessary, relevant information. The issues arising from the pilot study were as follows:

1. The question "How do you see yourself in the future?" posed difficulties as individuals experienced problems in predicting their life plans in the long term future. This indicated the need to specify a length of time. The participants found it helpful when they were asked to discuss their future up to the point when they felt able to give real representations of themselves. The researcher therefore avoided suggesting a specific number of years but left it to the interviewee to specify their own time schedule.

2. Individuals commented that the questions "What are you afraid of?" and "What do you hope for?" were too broad. Interviewees asked the interviewer whether or not they were to report possible realistic fears and hopes, or general fears like fear of death, or being disabled. It became



clear that there was a need to explain that what was required was what they were 'afraid of' or 'hoped for' on the basis of whether they perceived that these fears and hopes were possible.

3. The question addressed to individuals about their own future family life elicited information about different family roles: as a partner (spouse) and as a parent. This indicated that these two different roles had to be investigated separately.

4. Regarding friendships participants asked for an operational definition in order to answer the questions. This indicated the need for the interviewer to explain whether the questions concerned close friends or acquaintances. Friendships were therefore clarified as relating to close friendships, and interviewees' wish to get close to individuals they have already met or will meet in order to make new friendships.

5. Concerning career-occupational life, participants did provide information about their career prospects and professional relations, but the phrasing required clarification. Responses indicated a need for emphasis on two aspects in the career-occupation category, career future and occupational relationships.

6. With regard to leisure, participants required clarification about e.g. whether to name activities or to describe how they imagined themselves involved in them. They were informed that what was relevant was how they imagined themselves being involved in activities, either individually or socially.

7. The information participants provided about the most 'important' and most feasible 'possible selves' suggested that these questions needed to be specified with regard to each life domain that the study investigated. Consequently, different questions had to be addressed with regard to possible selves concerning family, career-occupation, friendships and leisure time. The questions regarding the most possible self and the most important self, overall remained the same, since they focused on the self central to one's life (either related to family, career-occupation, friendships or leisure).

8. Regarding the questions “How likely are these possible selves to be achieved” and “What have you done to make these possible selves come true?”, the researcher linked the questions with participants’ answers about the most important and most possible ‘possible selves’, they reported. The questions were not asked for each aspect of life separately but rather on the basis of the self the participants assessed as most possible and most important overall. Individuals asked for clarification regarding which possible selves the researcher wanted them to focus on: the ones they reported for each one of the four aspects of life separately or the one they perceived most possible and most important in general terms. It was decided that asking for information for each one of the possible selves reported by individuals in different areas, would give the researcher the chance to confirm previous information about the most possible and most important selves, which would be very useful.

9. Regarding the question “What’s the worst situation in which you could be in the future or the worst thing that could happen to you?”, individuals asked again whether they had to answer on the basis of each life area separately or not. As the answers would relate to similar information to that provided by a previous question: “What are you afraid of” it was decided to pose this question immediately after the question regarding the selves the individual is afraid of, in the future but this time the issue would be “what is overall the worst possible self”.

10. Generally, participants did not provide information about why the situations they reported were the worst, the most desired or the most possible. Although some participants gave clear reasons and justifications for their answers and preferences not all did. Consequently, it was decided each one of the above questions had to be completed by asking ‘why’-in order to ensure that justification was provided for each answer.

#### Overall contribution of the pilot study

Overall, the pilot study indicated that some questions had to be made more specific. No questions were rejected: however, some were modified. The pilot study contributed to their improvement by suggesting ways for these to be more focused on the target-information. Wording was left unchanged since no misunderstandings emerged during the course of the interviews.

No changes regarding the order of questions (apart from the last one) was indicated by the pilot study. The original order helped the researcher to link questions in such a way that information followed on and was obtained naturally. Each question emerged naturally from the answers to the previous question.

## **MAIN STUDY (PART A)**

### **EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWS**

#### **Aims:**

The aims of the interviews were:

- to develop ideas and research hypotheses about the role played by divorce and different divorce processes on possible selves
- to broaden and deepen our understanding of concepts relating to divorce and possible selves
- to make comparisons between possible selves reported by individuals from intact and divorced families
- to obtain information about individuals' perceptions of themselves in the future to be used as a basis for the development of a 'possible self questionnaire'. This was essential as there was no valid instrument for assessing 'possible selves'

#### **Procedure**

The interviews were semi-structured as in the pilot study. The interviewer first established a rapport with the interviewee. S/he was informed about the aim of the study and was assured of confidentiality. The interview was based on the planned interview schedule but sometimes the order was modified depending upon the researcher's perception of what seemed most important in the context of the 'conversation'. The way the questions were worded changed sometimes depending on the links being established with the previous information. Particular questions were left out when they seemed inappropriate for a particular interviewee. This occurred where the parental divorce scenario varied a great deal. Where appropriate the technique of funnelling was used. A broad question was stated and then narrowed down to more specific ones. All the interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. The time length for each interview session was about one hour and a half. No time limits were set by the researcher. The interviewer



allowed periods of silence that gave the interviewee a chance to think about the answer or to recall important information since s/he was asked to recall information and episodes that had occurred a long time ago. The silence periods extended from seconds to several minutes and when appropriate interviewer intervention in the form of repetition of the last phrase uttered by the individual was used. The interviewee was free to report any information s/he perceived as appropriate. Sometimes, this lead to very detailed descriptions of the situation that were not always useful. The individual's progress through the interviews was prompted, if necessary, although rarely, by the researcher offering verbal and nonverbal reinforcement, clarification of the points was made, echoing the participants' remarks so as to encourage further talk, and reflecting back the interviewees views. The interviews were conducted in either the researcher's or the interviewee's home, as the interviewee wished. They were conducted individually since the information was very private and personal.

## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

#### DIFFERENCES IN POSSIBLE SELVES REPORTED BY PARTICIPANTS FROM DIVORCED FAMILIES AND THEIR COUNTERPARTS FROM INTACT FAMILIES

The analysis of the interviews indicated a number of differences in the information reported by participants from divorced and intact families. These are presented in the following main sections:

- family life
- friendships
- occupational relationships
- occupation/career
- leisure.

As the data were analysed it became clear that there were also differences related to gender. These are also considered. The motivational power of possible selves, where a possible self is offset or balanced by the countervailing self in the same domain (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989; Oyserman and Markus, 1990a; 1990b), was explored, if apparent, since the majority of divorcees' offspring reported negative possible selves regarding all the life domains explored in the study. (An indicative interview is presented in Appendix B, for reasons of confidentiality only the section concerning possible selves is presented).

#### FAMILY LIFE

One of the issues highlighted in the earlier literature is a possible explanation of the intergenerational transmission of divorce because divorcees' offspring may be more open to divorce and perceive it as a more viable option to terminate a dysfunctional marriage than a child coming from an intact home (Greenberg and Nay, 1982). These findings are supported by the present study. One category of possible selves that emerged was the **divorced future self**. This category related to individuals' representations of selves regarding being divorced in the future and how likely this was perceived to be. The category emerged from information derived from the interviews with individuals from divorced families.

Almost all the participants from divorced families, both males and females acknowledged that

they might be divorced at some time in the future. Divorcees' offspring also suggested a need to be prepared for divorce, since it may be a part of their future lives. Indicative statements are given below:

S9 (F): "I always think of the possibility of divorce and that I have to be prepared for that ... although I want to see things from a positive perspective it is important to be aware of that possibility ... I shall cope with it... if it comes, yes, I shall cope with it...yes... I think so... I want to believe that I'll be able to cope with it... I know that there is a high possibility of this coming true... everything is possible in life... (p.2)"

S6 (M): "I wouldn't say that I want to live through a divorce situation ... I don't like divorce, break-ups etc... although it is a possibility you have to take into account in the future... otherwise you will not be prepared for it if you don't take account of it ... however, it is possible, isn't it (p.4)?"

S5 (M): "I don't see divorce as taboo but as a normal thing that may happen in my life ... I can't say that I'll get divorced because of some disagreements I may have with my wife but I know that divorce saves people, solves problems. It's a relief for people... I could see me and my partner in the future becoming more different than now... because we *are* different, so if I could end up getting divorced it could be related to this difference. I can't see things like being betrayed for another man ... what I can see in the future is being unable to compromise over this sort of difference that exists... (p.1)"

Two thirds of the males, and all the females from divorced families, reported that they were aware of the possibility that divorce might be a part of their future life. This was not the case for the participants from intact families. They did not report similar information. This was either because they did not consider divorce as part of their future lives or they were not worried about it sufficiently in order to mention it in the interviews. All the interviewees from divorced families reported themselves prepared to cope with divorce, should it arise, although all of them wanted to avoid it happening.

### **Self avoiding parental mistakes**

This category emerged from answers given by participants in relation to avoiding their parents' mistakes as a married couple. Males and females from both sub-samples (individuals from intact and divorced families) reported wishing to avoid the problems experienced in their parents' relationship. Individuals from intact families also reported their wish to avoid their parental pattern of living. This mainly related to unhappiness and everyday hassles which created a charged family atmosphere, not issues of keeping the family intact. Indicative statements are given below:

#### **Intact families:**

S7 (F): "... my parents got on quite well but you know there was always something between them ... they were living in a misery. My father is always strict, he does not follow other's opinions or choices he may argue with my mum for nothing like 'why is this here?' 'I told you to move it there today etc'. It's too much, isn't it? I know that it is a



problem, sometimes I think that if I were my mother I would definitely get divorced from him. ... it is strange, it is really strange, they love each other, they never thought of living separately, my father seems finally to love my mum, when we have arguments with our mum he usually says that your mother is very capable, very good housewife and a very responsible person. I am not going to live this kind of life with my husband, I will try not to let him be like that, you know it is the experiences I had at my home. I have to be quite close to my husband and he should be like that. For God's sake, no misery, no.... I think as long as I think of myself married to someone, lack of misery and mutual respect are the main things I shall struggle for...".

S11 (M): "... they were OK you know typical Greek married couple, my father is a teacher and I have the feeling that he is quite authoritative because he thinks that home is like school and we are his pupils. You know, you can hardly stand that sometimes... he always makes problems from nothing. He is almost always in a bad mood and he wants us to follow his wishes and demands the majority of which are rubbish... you know... my mother feels tired, she is really tired living through this for so many years. It is very interesting to see that he loves her, you can see that in difficult situations. He changes automatically, he is really scared of the possibility my mother may get ill or something, he takes care of her but he drives her mad so many times. He is a difficult person... but they manage to survive. This is something I cannot have with my wife... I cannot bear a life like that... an always charged atmosphere. I feel suffocated in such an environment. I am definitely not going to be like that. This is one of the main things I demand in a prospective married situation. But you know... new couples are not like that... they are quite happy and they want to be happy... if you want to be happy... you struggle to have that and you usually have that, it's not that difficult though... is it?"

#### Divorced families:

S9 (F): "... I think the most important thing in the relationship I shall have with my husband is for both of us to be responsible for our behaviour and feelings etc.... to be determined to keep our relationship and our family intact...(p.5) It is a lesson I got from my parents, I want to keep in touch with my husband, you know... my parents didn't manage to keep their family... to resolve their problems..."

S12 (M): "... I want happiness with my partner, I'd like to be happy, free of conflicts, I want my relationships to work well... I think we will both work for each other's benefit... you know it is the situation somebody experienced at home ...(p.1), they couldn't get on but they didn't work it out, they didn't want to, they couldn't see it... I don't know...but my mother's relationship with my stepfather is excellent. He is so nice..."

Two males (S1, S11) and three of the six females from intact families reported, with a sense of bitterness, an awareness of their parents' mistakes and the wish not to repeat these in their own family. All those from divorced families except one male who had a very good post divorce family life with his step-father and his mother, reported that they wanted to avoid the mistakes their parents made in the relationship they had together.

The difference between the reports of individuals from divorced and intact families was that in the intact families, although the parents had arguments, they were still in love in a somehow 'hidden way'. This was not the case for parents who were divorced. Their offspring reported that their parents had not managed to keep their family intact and they seemed to complain about them being incapable of identifying and resolve their problems in order to stay together and protect the family as a unit. Such accounts were reported by both males and females.

## **Self concerned with marital communication**

Also emerging from the data was the issue of communication. This also discriminated between the two groups (intact-divorced families). Inter-family communication seemed to be an important factor in family life, particularly between spouses.

### Divorced families

S4 (F): "...what I am afraid of in my own family is lack of communication. If I had a husband and a child my biggest fear would be not to be communicating... just to be having a relationship of convenience and going through the motions without really being intimate with each other...(p.6)".

S5 (M): "... good communication is the most important thing I have to work towards in my family, especially with my wife it is bad for things to be unspoken.. this is what happened with my parents... I think that I need that and I have to struggle for that...(p.4)".

Half of the males and females from intact families reported this representation of self. All the males and females, from divorced families stressed the need for good communication with their partners since they had learned from their parents' divorce that this was the "key" to a happy marriage. This was one of the aspects that their parents' marriage lacked. They reported good communication with their partners as a positive possible self. They also emphasised their negative experiences because their parents were not able to communicate well enough with each other to stay together. This had become part of their future representations of themselves in a relationship.

## **Ideal self regarding future personal family life**

This category emerged from information offered by only two females from divorced families. They reported themselves as "going to be in a very happy family" in the future. They imagined themselves living in an extremely well functioning and pleasant family atmosphere. They seemed to have an unrealistic positive image of themselves although they seem also to be aware of this. These images almost have the quality of a day dream rather than a realistic representation of themselves in the future. No practical steps were reported by them as a way of succeeding in the construction of this extremely positive image of their future family life. This contrasted with the other possible selves explored in the study.

### Divorced families

S9 (F): "... I imagine myself in a very happy family, perfectly happy, like Bill Cosby, you know... me being a perfect mother having a brilliant relationship with both my husband and my children ... to have good jobs, and coming back

home in the afternoon and everybody to be very happy, *I know that it is not possible for that to happen* but that's how I want to think of my future family...(p.2) ... I don't really want to have passionate relationship with my husband, not ups and downs, I'd like to get comfort from that relationship, no troubles no arguments, not always being worried about what is going to happen with him... not to have endless discussions and arguments without any profit to come out of that... I mean you know... to come up with some sort of answer and solution to our problems... (p.1)".

S3 (F): "... I want to see everything from a positive perspective, that everything will be good for my future family.. to have a good relationship with my husband and my children, to be happy .. to be able to be available to all the family members... to talk all together ...(p.2)".

### **Highly protective/authoritative parent**

This category emerged from only one male from a divorced family who reported himself as likely to be highly protective towards his children, since his parents did not protect, or care, about him, because they were concerned with their own problems.

#### Divorced families

S12 (M): "... there may be times that I'll be overprotective, I see that from my sisters. I protect my sisters and they are aged now about twenty and twenty two years old, but my parents did not protect me. They did not protect them so I am the oldest brother and I have to do that. I am the father figure, I have to protect my children as well... you know, it is because of what I experienced at home... (p.2)".

A possible self as an overprotective parent being extremely caring of his children seemed to be the outcome of his perception of his parents' lack of interest in their children. The other individuals from divorced families did not report similar information. Their concern was about being protective and supportive parents. Their answers were similar to those given by individuals from intact families, who did not report themselves as being overprotective. A typical statement is given below.

#### Intact families

S8 (M): " I want to be a caring parent, a good parent, I'd like be able to help my children with their education, to make decisions about their future occupational life... I want to let them make decisions on their own, to learn how to think and cope with difficulties in their lives... I think a supportive parent plays a crucial role in children's lives but the life belongs to them and also the decisions ...".

S2 (M): " I hope I'll be a good father, a useful father... I don't know how to call it but I want to stand by them and be always available to them. I hope I'll not oppress them although you know... you can never be sure, it's like trying to protect them as much as possible... but ... since you are aware of it you can avoid it... I'll make sure that they will eventually take the decisions by themselves, the life belongs to them... but I'll always be there for them... "

Individuals from intact families and those from divorced families who did not report themselves



overprotected, reported wanting their children to be independent, although not absolutely out of their control. They perceived themselves as points of reference and support for their children but they wanted them to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their lives.

### **Optimistic-pessimistic self with regard to relationships and future family life**

The category, optimistic-pessimistic self, emerging from the data, revealed differences between the two groups. Under this category answers were coded relating to participants' expectations of having a happy family life, or not. Individuals in the pessimistic self category gave answers that suggested a pessimistic outlook for a future family life or life with partners/spouse. This generally was the case for divorcees' offspring. Five out of six females and four out of six males reported negative selves in relation to relationships with the opposite sex.

#### Divorced families

S9 (F): "... I never had a long relationship so, I don't know how it is going to be... but I heard about and I believe that it is difficult to find the balance, to find the breaking point... From my perspective what is more likely to happen is not to get on with the person you are going to get married to... let's say that the one likes the other and they are in love... this will not be the case after 2 or 3 years because they will get bored. The situation is always like that: the ones you want are not available and they possibly do not like you and you are attractive to those people you don't like... so you will never find the right man ... So, you get married because of being quite old and one of these relationships ends in marriage not because of being the best one but because of the time, this is something you have to do in our society... it's a matter of timing actually (p.6)".

S8 (M) " I hardly project myself into the future when it comes to these questions. I take life on a daily basis. I don't know... I could imagine myself being married, having children. I could also imagine myself like my father, being single until forty ... you know having this kind of life, moving from one woman to another until I get trapped... yes... that's the word, isn't it? ... anyway marriage is not necessarily positive ... I can see my parents... (p.1)".

Four out of the six males from divorced families reported that they did not think it was very likely that they would have a family. They had a vague image of themselves in a future relationship with a partner. But they seemed to feel insecure about any future family situation. This was also apparent in the female group, they seemed to perceive themselves single in the future, and had already had an unhappy experience which made them think of the possibility of being single. An example is given below:

#### Divorced families

S1 (F): "... I see myself being single in the future, me and my music, I don't want to have children... there is no reason to bring them into trouble if you are not sure whether or not you can give them a proper family to live in ... I'm not going to repeat my parents' mistakes... I had enough ... I know how it is ... I have already experienced very sad moments of betrayals with my companion in the past... I know that I am very vulnerable to such situations... I always

make the same mistakes with my boyfriends although I try to avoid them, I don't know what happens... the same story... it has been repeated many times... that's why I say that I see myself single in the future... just me, myself'

Two thirds of individuals from intact families reported a positive representation of self regarding future family life, especially with regard to relationships with their partners.

Intact families

S5 (F) “.. my first priority is to get on quite well with my partner, my husband... I think that I have the strength to struggle for the things I want to have in my life and I think I'll manage to succeed in anything I want ... I hope to have a happy home life with my husband (p.5)”.

S2 (M) “...Regarding family... I think it is very likely to have a happy family... this is one of my priorities: family and job...I'm already engaged... I am happy now...I think I get on very well with my partner, we are happy, yes... I think so... both of us(p.5)”.

Only four out of the twelve participants from intact families reported a pessimistic self towards a future family situation. The information they reported was similar to that reported by divorcees' offspring.

Intact families

S6 (F): “... I can't say anything at the moment about my future life, I mean my family life... I'd like to get married, I want to settle down and I think that I'm going to have this... but you know... I can't be sure for the relationship with my husband... even now, I have a lot of problems with my boyfriends, I cannot say that I trust them... I can't really be firm on that ... sometimes I say you will be happy, while sometimes not... I don't know...”.

*Table 3: Males and females from both intact and divorced families categorised according to the optimistic or pessimistic self they reported regarding their future family life.*

Intact families Males	Optimistic S1, S2, S8, S11 4/6	Pessimistic S9, S12 2/6
Females	S3, S4, S5, S10 4/6	S6, S7 2/6
Divorced families Males	S11, S12 2/6	S5, S6, S7, S8 4/6
Females	S10 1/6	S1, S2, S3, S4, S9 5/6

## **Keen on getting married**

This category concerns the individual's preference and determination to either get married, or not. Information about the participants' adaptability to different situations, either being on their own, or, within a family (having their own family) for the rest of their lives was also coded under this category. Examples from the categories are given below:

### Intact families

(Both acceptable)

S4 (F): "Yes, I can imagine it, I can see myself in a family with kids etc. I wouldn't want to have a family in circumstances which I don't like but overall yes, it is something I would enjoy(p.2) ... you know if that does not happen it would not be a disaster for me. If I had my family it would be very important to me obviously, but it is not something I crave, I desperately want. If I don't have a family I shall not feel that I have failed in life, that there is something I missed out on ... (p.5)".

(Keen on marriage)

S6 (F): "... many years ago I wanted to be a business woman but now I know quite well that there are many other things in life that are quite important ... I don't really care whether I am a manager or not. It wouldn't mean anything for me if I had to sacrifice my personal life. I want to get married and I think in the end this is my priority. I would be unhappy if I had to come home from work and I had nobody to talk to, to be next to me... (p.10)".

### Divorced families

(Not getting married)

S4 (F): "If you ask me how I imagine myself in a family situation... probably not, I don't imagine myself having kids or something. It's nice to have a companion, but family is not one of my priorities, not something I look for. I am not preoccupied with that. It's probably a silly fear but I think a lot of people probably have it, of having to be dependent on somebody. I've always tried to be an independent person and I think I feared that I might not manage and that I might have to be dependent on a partner or something...(p.1)".

(Not getting married)

S2 (F): "I would not want to get married but if that happened in one way or another I would never want children. Definitely I don't want children, I don't think it's fair to put them in that situation, in a divorce situation, or in a conflict environment etc. (p.11)".

### Divorced families/ Males

(Marriage is always a possibility)

S5 (M): "... I can see myself married in the future, there is nothing wrong with that, I'd like to have family, children etc. but I'd also wouldn't mind to be single, it's OK... you know... overall yes... I'd like to get married but it's not the first priority in my life... I'd like to..."

Two out of the six females from intact families reported that they would like to get married but if that did not happen it would not be a disaster for them; being married, or not, would be acceptable by them (S3 and S4). Four out of the six females from intact families reported clearly that they wanted to get married (S5, S6, S7, S10) although they were aware of potential difficulties they might encounter. None rejected the idea of family. However, this was not the case for females from divorced families. Three out of the six females reported that they could not see themselves in a family (S1, S2, S4), they could not even imagine it. Only one divorcees' female offspring



reported herself keen on getting married in the future.

*Table 4: Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to their flexibility to be in a married situation or not.*

Intact families Males	Getting married S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6	Not getting married -	Both acceptable -
Females	S5, S6, S7, S10 4/6	-	S3, S4 2/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S6, S7, S8, S11, S12 6/6	-	-
Females	S10 1/6	S1, S2, S4 3/6	S3, S9 2/6

**Independent self in the future family life**

This category emerged from information concerning interviewees' eagerness to 'keep their own space', to maintain privacy in their lives and think of their independence regardless of the existence of another person (spouse/partner) with whom they might share their lives. It was related to their need to have a private life, apart from the common life they shared or would share with their partners. This category emerged from responses from female participants. The female interviewees' responses could be categorised as perceiving to the future a fairly independent or very independent self. All the males from divorced and intact families reported themselves independent in their marriage. An example is given below:

Intact families (independent)

S9 (M): "I want both of us to be independent in our relationship, in the family. I want to have a sort of personal life on my own and to be as independent as possible. I don't know how difficult it is for something like that to come true ... but I need that. I cannot imagine myself in a conventional family life, a miserable and a routine life, that's something I really hate... I'm not keen on the idea of sharing everything and two different personalities to be forced to accept each other because of the marriage... (p.2)".

Half of the divorcees' female sample reported themselves fairly independent (S3, S9, S10) while the other half reported themselves very independent (S1, S2, S4). 'Fairly independent' divorcees' female offspring reported that they would like being in a family although they were aware of the

problems this might create in their lives in terms of their independence and focus on themselves as individuals. They expressed a desire to have a family and saw themselves as trying to be good partners and parents in order to sustain a happy family, something they missed in their own upbringing.

Divorced families (fairly independent):

S9 (F): "... I know it is difficult to be with someone, I never managed to be in a long-term relationship but you know... I am really keen on a happy family life, I think I can manage that. Of course, I need my space, I cannot say that my partner will be the main person in my life but I want to be dedicated to my family and I think I can do that. You know I want to have privacy while at the same time I can say that my family will be a point of reference for me, especially my children..."

Divorcees' female offspring who reported themselves as very independent did not perceive themselves willing to make compromises and accept their spouses as persons with whom they should share their lives in order to be in a family. They seem to be preoccupied with the idea that as families do not function successfully there is no reason for them to become involved with and committed to a family life in the future. Consequently, independence is a positive perception of their future life.

Divorced families (independent)

S1 (F): "... the positive thing I got out of the divorce was a general understanding about marriage and relationships. Now, I can use that for something. For myself, definitely, I will be more careful myself to make a decision about marrying somebody. I'm going to be so careful. I'm not going to rush. One thing that my dad always said is that marriage is a compromise, when you marry someone you have to compromise. I don't want to make compromises with the person I am going to marry, I will be as I am now, I shall have my own life, I am not going to try to share things with him... I mean if I don't want.... So, this is what I think I have learned and I am going to work towards that...(p.12)".

S2 (F): "I know that family does not work, so I am not going to make compromises. I've decided to be on my own and that's how I'd like to see myself in the future... I see a lot of marriages do not work, I can see very difficult ones with lots of compromises between two people and a lot of arguments and that's why I don't want to get involved in that. I won't be compromised or make compromises...(p.1)".

Half of the females from divorced families reported a need to be very independent in their relationship with their partner, and to have an equal relationship with their husbands; they wanted to keep their own way of life. No compromising or sharing with their partners-spouses in terms of allowing them to take over their lives was reported by females from divorced families.

Most of the females from intact families (five out of the six) reported that they were, and wanted to be independent but they also perceived sharing their lives with a future husband and attempting

to maintain a supportive relationship in the marriage.

Intact families

S6 (F): “I imagine myself in a family... in a happy family but I'd like to keep my own self, not to be consumed by the other ...(p.2)... if I had to choose career or family I would not be perfectly sure about what I really want... I want to be independent and to have an equal relationship with my husband, not being at home all the day doing housework etc., not to become his servant...(p.8) but I want to be a good mother, a good spouse, a supportive one...”

Only one individual from an intact family (S3) wanted complete independence fearing being oppressed by her husband; her own well-being was the major priority she set in her life. However, at the same time she wanted to be supportive and close to family members. She also did not exhibit negative perceptions about family dysfunction in general.

Intact families

S3 (F): “I want to be allowed to be myself... if it is like that I shall be a good spouse, if not then obviously there'll be a lot of conflict... I mean I shall try not to have conflicts, I am generally not a conflict person, I am generally a peacemaker but if things get tough and I am oppressed then you know..., there's going to be trouble. I don't like people to tell me how to be, what to do. .... I'd like to have freedom to travel, to move out, to be myself, to do my own thing ...(p.3)”

The degree of independence reported by the two groups of females (individuals from divorced and intact families) is indicated in the following table.

*Table 5: Level of independence of females from divorced and intact families.*

Intact families Females	Fairly Independent S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 5/6	Independent S3 1/6
Divorced families Females	S3, S9, S10 3/6	S1, S2, S4 3/6

**Self in control (or not) of future family life (the role of spouse/partner)**

This category emerged from participants’ representations of self regarding having control over a future family situation, and the relationship they will have with their partners or spouses. Concerns with the role of the partner and whether s/he might break the relationship, issues regarding partners being unfaithful and unreliable were the main focus. This was the case for both males and females. Not being in control of future family life was the main perceived possibility for the majority of divorcees’ offspring. This was less so for those from intact families.

Divorced families

S1 (F): “I have this total insecurity and feeling that I can’t trust him... (p.14) ... every girl that my boyfriend comes into contact with I feel this possessiveness, it’s really jealousy, the feeling that I don’t control the situation, the feeling that he is going to find that more interesting than me, or more attractive than me. I’m always like that ... it was the



same with previous boyfriends ... I know I can't get rid of that ... I think I'll never be confident of being able to control my relationship, my boyfriends, or my husband later on... (p.14, 15)".

S8 (M): " ... it's a matter of fidelity in one sense... it's the other person's behaviour, you could say that it is a matter of destiny, or fate whether you will be with a certain partner or not in your life. You cannot control everything actually... it is the other's behaviour that makes things quite bad or uncontrollable".

Intact families

S5 (F): "At the moment I am very happy with my relationship, I don't know what's going to happen in the future... however, I have to say that if distance creates problems in my relationship I will not risk my relationship. I want to be in control of my personal life I am not the type of person who would let things happen ... nothing is a matter of fate for me ... I know that I always have to be alert and concerned with my partnership... (p.7)".

S1 (M): "The worst thing I suppose that would happen if I was in a family would be something happening to my children, I think ... I don't think betrayal would be a huge worry... something like a war happening. I think I can handle possibly unpleasant situations with a partner ... yes, I think so... I don't think that something can happen in my life concerning my relationship with my partner/spouse and I'll not be able to do something about... (p.6)".

Three (S8, S11, S12) of the six males from intact families reported that their relationship with their partner depended to a large extent on the partner, or on factors that they could not control or predict. They felt that they had no control over their relationships with partners. Four of the six males from divorced families reported that they could not control relationships with partners. The findings with regard to female participants were similar. Five out of the six females from divorced families reported themselves not able to control their future relationships with partners. This was not the case for two out of the six females from intact families. They seem to be determined to control and be responsible for their future family life and were confident of doing so, especially their relationship with their husband/ wife. The females from intact families seemed to already be aware of the issue of control over their relationships/ partnerships. This did not apply to the males.

*Table 6: Males and females categorised according to the control they reported regarding their relationships with partners.*

Intact families Males	Self not in control S8, S11, S12 3/6	Self in control S1, S2, S9 3/6
Females	S3, S4, S6, S7 4/6	S5, S10 2/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S6, S7, S8 4/6	S11, S12 2/6
Females	S1, S2, S3, S4, S9 5/6	S10 1/6

In this category the differences were smaller than in other categories. The majority of both sexes and almost the same number of individuals from intact and divorced families feel out of control regarding their relationships or future relationships with partners.

### **Cautious self regarding future relations with partners**

This category emerged from information reported only by individuals from divorced families. They reported the necessity for caution with regard to their choice of partner in terms of whether this partnership would lead to a happy family life.

#### Divorced families

S10 (F) "... I feel that I have to be very cautious about what I'll do with regard to my family because I know that it is quite possible to come up with a divorce in my life because many people get divorced ... I don't know really if many people get divorced or whether I have focused on divorce because of my parents.. I don't know but I know that statistics show a high rate of divorce ... so I want to be ready for that (p.2)".

S6 (M) "... I feel like I have to be cautious when the time comes that I have to choose someone to be my partner in a relationship to form a family. Some people say about it: "that's a risky business" I don't know.. (p.3)"

This representation of self was reported by all the males and females from divorced families and none from intact families. The information reported by females was more detailed than that reported by males. Females clearly related parental divorce and the situation at home with their caution towards their choice of partner as a spouse. Males seem to be clear on the need to be cautious when they make the decision regarding their permanent partner but they did not elaborate this or make links with their parental family.

### **Satisfied with relations with current partners**

This category emerged from information regarding satisfaction in relationships. Overall, females reported more satisfaction. (Males from both divorced and intact families reported themselves as not sure whether they were happy or satisfied). The differences were related to the extent of satisfaction experienced from relationships with partners so far and expectations of future partnerships. All the females from divorced families reported themselves unsatisfied with relationships with partners while this was the case for only two (S7, S10) females from intact families.

Intact families

S5 (F) "... I am quite satisfied with my personal life up to now.. I am satisfied with the relationship with my partner... I've also enjoyed my life in general ... I mean as an adolescent I had quite a lot of nice and crazy experiences and I got involved in many relationships, so I think that I have decided to get married to that man because I am sure that this is the right person for me .. I'm sure about the choice I made ... (p.7)".

Divorced families

S9 (F): "... No, I am not satisfied at all ... I'm single and I feel lonely. I was always single as far as I remember myself, except some small periods of time when I had a boyfriend but these relationships were short-term ones... not more than two or three months. This is something I am concerned about ... I am not satisfied with my personal life but I try to be optimistic otherwise it will drive me crazy (p.9)".

Males from both divorced and intact families reported that this question was irrelevant to them since they did not see any reason to be unsatisfied with their relationships. They mentioned that the nature of a relationship depends on the particular period when it takes place. All of them reported that they were both satisfied and unsatisfied to some extent regarding certain aspects of a relationship. A typical statement is given below.

Intact families

S1 (M) "... I cannot answer such questions it's a matter of personal attitude towards happiness etc... I had good moments, I had bad moments as well with my partners but I cannot understand what's wrong with that. That's relationships, that's life... I can't say it was horrible, I cannot say it was excellent... yes, ok I can say it was ok, but nothing more... I can't really answer such questions..."

Most of the females (four out of the six), who came from intact families suggested that they were satisfied with their personal life, and their current and past relationships. This was not the case for females who came from divorced families. Almost all of them (five out of the five, since one, S2, reported that she did not want to have relationships at all) described a non satisfied self with regard to their personal relationships. The differences between females from divorced and intact families were clear. All the females from divorced families were unsatisfied with their past and current relationships and anticipated difficulties for future relationships.

*Table 7: Females from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they are satisfied or not with their relationships.*

Intact families Females	Satisfied S3, S4, S5, S6 4/6	Unsatisfied S7, S10 2/6
Divorced families Females	-	S1, S3, S4, S9, S10 5/5



## **Capable self regarding 'succeeding' in future family life**

This categorisation accommodated information reported by both males and females from divorced and intact families. Differences between divorced and intact families occurred only among the females. (All the males from both divorced and intact families reported themselves capable of having a happy future family life and did not see any reason for not being able to handle difficulties that may emerge in their family life. Their representations of capability possibly reflect part of their gender identities. An indicative statement is given below.

### Divorced families (male reporting himself as capable):

S5 (M): "I cannot see any reason for me not to be able to make my personal life as good as I want. I don't know what you mean by being capable but it's ok, if you ask me about me myself yes, I am capable... if there is any problem I'll cope with that... I cannot say in advance how well I will cope with it but yes... I think I can solve it... life is full of problems... anyway..."

### Intact families (capable)

S5 (F): "... I feel very capable of having my own family and a good relationship with my husband.... at least at this moment I see things in a positive way. I know that he loves me and I love him as well ... one respects the other. We can build up our common life... maybe I am capable because I believe that if you are happy in your relationship you are happy with everything and you can manage to do everything... (p.5)".

### Intact families (incapable)

S7 (F): "I don't really think about family, it's not that I don't care. I do care but I'm probably afraid of not to be able to do it probably... I don't know. I mean it's just my explanation, may be wrong... but I'd like to have a good husband ... children... that's my main idea of my family in the future (p.2)".

### Divorced families (capable)

S3 (F): "I want to succeed in two roles in my life, as a mother and as a wife... to be available to all members of my family, I'm not worried whether I am able to help others, I am sure I am ... I'm capable of doing everything (p.2)... I'd like to be able to have both good career and family life... my job...it's most possible for me to have in the future... yes, to have a good job rather than a good family... but I think I am capable of having a good family, you know to be a good mother, bring up my children etc. (p.4)".

### Divorced families (incapable)

S9 (F) " ... I am not very capable of succeeding in my personal life... it's a matter of emotional stability... and I am afraid that I am going to lose it because of my family story about divorce and things like that.... things do not depend on me, so I don't control the situation perfectly... the other part is also in the game; consequently it isn't very clear whether I am going to get on well in a family situation...(p.7)"

Almost all the females, five out of the six, from intact families, reported themselves capable of having a happy family life and maintaining a good relationship with their husband. However, only two out of the six females (S3, S10) from divorced families reported themselves capable of having a good family life. One of them (S3) indicated that she enjoyed family life but she perceived herself likely not to have one; the other (S10) suggested she was only capable, conditionally, upon the present good relationship with her partner. Overall, four out of the six females from divorced

families reported themselves as not capable, while only one participant from an intact family presented herself incapable of having a good relationship, and consequently a happy family (S7). She also described how she would like to be in a family situation and to dedicate herself to it.

*Table 8: Females and males from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they perceived themselves as capable or not to have a happy future family life.*

Intact families Males	Capable S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6	Incapable -
Females	S3, S4, S5, S6, S10 5/6	S7 1/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S6, S7, S8, S11, S12 6/6	-
Females	S3, S10 2/6	S1, S2, S4, S9 4/6

**Confident of ‘accomplishing’ the image of his/her personal future family life**

This category is similar to the previous category ‘capable-non capable’ category. It is not whether interviewees perceive themselves as either capable or incapable of doing something but whether they believe that the qualities they have are sufficient to lead them to a desired future family situation. The information they reported regarded themselves not as individuals but rather as being involved with others. They were aware of the uncertainty and unpredictability of family situations. For divorcees’ offspring previous experiences, either personal or vicarious (from parents or acquaintances) made them perceive themselves as capable but unconfident since the presence of the other, partner/spouse, may destroy what they have developed or tried to in their personal life/relationship. Regarding individuals from intact families, confidence was related to generally unpredictable situations e.g. health, financial problems, and an open way of living including a variety of experiences and new information which may change the family life, especially his/her relationship with the spouse.

Intact families

S10 (F) “... I feel quite confident, I think once I am able to make a decision to have a family and I put a lot of effort into... I think I would put a lot of effort into everything, I want to do so. I know that a lot of it depends obviously on the other person but I think if you both want something and try to... you will manage to do that... Regarding myself I feel perfectly capable... (p.7)... I think there would be no situation over which I shall have no control... ”.

S2 (M) "... I think it is a matter of effort for me and of being determined to do that... family is my priority and I am going to have a family and I hope that I am going to succeed in my family. I don't know whether I shall accomplish everything I want with regard to my family... e.g. having a high quality family life and emotional well-being and having enough money to help my children financially but overall I think that I am very capable...(p.4).. The only anxieties I have are about finances.. and whether financial problems in the family create arguments in the family... worries about the start of our common life... but overall yes, ... I think I am confident why not? I think I can manage to have what I want God willing (p.4)".

#### Divorced families

S1 (F) "... I cannot say that I feel confident in succeeding in a future family life, although I feel capable, it's him and the others, some other girls who always get involved... if I spot a realistic possibility in terms of family for me it is a non-married relationship for myself, you know, one where I am just living with somebody but I would be afraid of making a long term commitment (p.2)... I think I would never manage to have a good relationship... I am insecure... I may lose my partner because of my own possessiveness. I know that I have this not very attractive feature...(p.5)".

S6 (M) "... in a family situation there is always the possibility of being put down and being hurt by the other person... it's the other who is involved in the relationship... I think I am capable of being a good father, a good supporting spouse but it's always the other who may change the situation against ... you ... you know how it is ... you can never be sure about anyone, she may destroy everything... you can't do anything about that, can you?... (p.3)".

#### Intact families (unconfident)

S9 (M): "I can see myself in a family, I like children, but I cannot say that I am going to be with the same partner all my life through, you know ... life changes, people change... so it is not a matter of capability it is a matter of the life per se. After some years I may not want to be married, I may need to be alone, it is not that I will not be able to be a good father or spouse but just I may do not want to be there, I am not confident that I'll balance the experiences I may have and my needs with what she offers me, I mean she may be the appropriate wife for sometime but not for an other time, you know... it is one's every day needs and the demands of a marriage, the appropriateness of the other person at a particular time..., that's why I say that I am not confident of being in a happy marriage but I definitely think that I can be a supportive parent and spouse..."

Almost all of the individuals from divorced families reported themselves lacking in confidence regarding their future family, and their relationship with their spouse in that family. Only two (S9, S12) of the six males and one (S7) of the six females from intact families reported themselves not confident of succeeding in their future family life. All the females and four out of the six males, from divorced families presented themselves as not confident about their future family life. Their basic concern was regarding their relationship with their partners. For most of them this relationship was perceived as unpredictable. Their lack of control over their relationship, their belief (in some cases) that families did not work and their failure to establish a good relationship together made them lack confidence.



*Table 8a: Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to the confident or unconfident self they reported about their future family life.*

Intact families Males	Confident S1, S2, S8, S11 3/6	Unconfident S9, S12 2/6
Females	S3, S4, S5, S6, S10 5/6	S7 1/6
Divorced families Males	S11, S12 2/6	S5, S6, S7, S8 4/6
Females	-	S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10 6/6

**Summary of the findings regarding possible selves and future family circumstance**

Table 9 provides a summary of the findings described above. The possible selves are categorised as positive and negative within each domain. Overall divorcees’ offspring reported more negative possible selves than individuals from intact families regarding their future personal family life. The positive and negative possible selves were not defined in terms of individuals’ desires and fears respectively but whether they promoted and indicated individuals’ involvement/orientation to personal relationships and family life. Some of the possible selves in Table 9 appear only in individuals from divorced families. These possible selves are negative indicating the possibility of divorce in the future and caution in the choice of a permanent partner. Representations of selves in relation to taking action to avoid parental mistakes and trying to develop good marital communication indicate that divorcees’ offspring expect themselves to be involved in divorce despite their attempts to have a positive family life (Greenberg and Nay, 1982; Kalter et al, 1985; Franklin et al, 1990; Stone and Hutchman, 1992). There also seem to be gender differences since divorcees’ female offspring reported more negative possible selves than their counterparts from intact families and males from divorced families. These findings are consistent with the relevant literature regarding the intergenerational transmission of divorce (Pope and Mueller, 1976; Mueller and Pope, 1977; Wallerstein, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989) and the identification of females as more vulnerable than males to the effects of parental divorce on their lives (Gleen and Kramer, 1987). Some males (S5, S6, S7, S8) and females (S1, S2, S3, S4) seem to report a cluster of negative possible selves about relationships with the opposite sex. Perhaps, they relate to the individuals’ self-efficacy which contributes to the development of an overall image of self e.g.

divorced, pessimistic towards future family life. It is notable that although females from divorced and intact families reported more possible selves than males; males and females from intact families reported less possible selves than those from divorced families. This is especially the case for males. Those from intact families reported only half of the possible selves described by their counterparts from divorced families. This suggests that parental divorce leads offspring to develop well elaborated and detailed schemata of family life. They appear to be more motivated and highly concerned about their own future family life than their counterparts from intact families since they reported many positive and negative selves in the same domain, marital life.

Indications of the motivational power of possible selves can be seen in relation to divorcees' offspring representations of selves concerning avoiding parental mistakes and focusing on marital communication. These may be balanced by the possibility of getting divorced in the future. Divorcees' offspring are focused on good communication with their spouses and perceive themselves as trying to avoid parental mistakes in their own marriage in order to reduce the possibility of getting divorced themselves. However, it may be that the possible self of being divorced in the future is not a strongly feared self but rather a negative possible self of which they are aware. This supports earlier literature regarding the communication of attitudes towards marriage which contributes to marital instability suggesting a disinhibitory effect of parental modelling on children's attitudes towards divorce (Greenberg and Nay, 1982). Perhaps, the motivational power of a negative possible self is reduced where one is familiar with the situation (either through ones own or vicarious experiences); one knows how to survive it. The motivational power of balanced possible selves, may depend on the individual's perception of what is at stake when a negative possible self comes true rather than a general fear of experiencing a certain situation (parental divorce). The experience of parental divorce may be linked with a more permissive attitude towards divorce and a view of marriage as a temporary commitment which can be readily terminated if unsatisfactory. This would also support earlier findings that where the experience of parental divorce was negative, one may enter into marriage with a more profound fear of marital failure and a much greater commitment to make it successful (Greenberg and Nay, 1982). The findings partially challenge the theory of possible selves concerning the motivational power of negative possible selves and may indirectly indicate that what drives people is positive possible selves. This seems to be the case for participants S5, S6, S7, S8 who seem to have been

negatively affected by parental divorce and report a cluster of negative possible selves regarding their future family life.

Table 9: Summary table indicating positive and negative possible selves regarding future personal family life.

	<i>DIVO</i>	<i>RCED</i>	<i>FAMI</i>	<i>LTES</i>	<i>INT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>FAMI</i>	<i>LTES</i>
<i>FAMILY</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>
Getting divorced		S5, S6, S7, S8		S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10				
Self avoiding parental mistakes	S5, S6, S7, S8, S12		S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10					
Marital communication focused self	S5, S6, S7, S8, S11, S12		S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10					
Ideal self			S3, S9					
Authoritative/highly protective parent	S5, S6, S7, S8, S11	S12	S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10		S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12		S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10	
Optimistic about personal family life	S11, S12	S5, S6, S7, S8	S10	S1, S2, S3, S4, S9	S1, S2, S8, S11	S9, S12	S3, S4, S5, S10	S6, S7
Independence within marriage			S3, S9, S10	S1, S2, S4			S4, S5, S6, S7, S10	S3
Self in control of marital relationship	S11, S12	S5, S6, S7, S8	S10	S1, S2, S3, S4, S9	S1, S2, S9	S8, S11, S12	S5, S10	S3, S4, S6, S7
Cautious about the selection of the permanent partner		S5, S6, S7, S8, S11, S12		S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10				
Satisfied with partnerships/ affairs				S1, S3, S4, S9, S10			S3, S4, S5, S6	S7, S10
Capable of having a happy future family life			S3, S10	S1, S2, S4, S9			S3, S4, S5, S6, S10	S7
Confident of having a happy future family life	S11, S12	S5, S6, S7, S8		S1, S2, S3, S4, S9, S10	S1, S2, S8, S11	S9, S12	S3, S4, S5, S6, S10	S7
Married future self			S3, S9, S10	S1, S2, S4			S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10	

### FRIENDSHIPS

#### Friendships not perceived as significant in participants’ lives

This is a broad category, concerned with the importance attached to developing friendships. It is related to the benefits friends provide to individuals. Feelings towards and needs for friends in participants’ lives are coded under this category.



Most of the participants, males and females saw themselves as having friends and expressed that this was a positive experience. Three of those from divorced families demonstrated negative possible selves in relation to friendships.

Intact families

S3 (F): "... my friends are an extremely valuable part of my life, my friends make up my spiritual family... that's why I'm saying they are so important to me... I cannot survive without them, I think... I count on them more than my family... I think I am the sort of person that makes people feel comfortable and there is always a friendly, happy atmosphere around..."

S1 (M): "... I can't say that I am a sort of very social person but I like being with people, making friends, going out together and having fun... I like socialising... for example, being at the University, it gives you the chance to meet new people and go out with and cooperate with them ...it's a good experience"

Divorced families

S2 (F): "... Having friends and not having friends, it does not bother me because all I think about is my work, so I don't mind if I have friends or not . I don't feel lonely about it. I have lots of things to do. I still find it very useful to work(p.2)".

S8 (M): "... I don't think about friends. It is not a highly important part of my life. I hardly think about friends, how it is going to be in the future... everything is like I'll be able to have friends. It is not very important to me to have close friends...(p.2)".

*Table 10: Individuals from divorced and intact families who reported themselves keen or not on friendships.*

Intact families	Not keen on friendships	Keen on friendships
Males	-	S1, S2, S8, S9, ,S11, S12 6/6
Females	-	S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 6/6
Divorced families	S8, S12	S5, S6, S7, S11
Males	2/6	4/6
Females	S2 1/6	S1, S3, S4, S9, S10 5/6

From this category two subcategories emerged; the detached self and a self where transitory relationships were reported.

1. **Detached self:** This category describes the strength of commitment to friendships. It was related to participants' lack of eagerness to become too close to friends, to have a deep relationship with them and their need to be self reliant.

Intact families

S3 (F): “ I cannot say I’m attached to my friends, I disagree with them a lot of times but this is nothing special, disagreement means progress, doesn’t it? I like them I’m close to them keeping at the same time my own qualities, beliefs as a person... I am really keen on them and also very supportive to them... however you know... they are also available and supportive to me as well, this is the case...(p.3)”.

S9 (M): “... I like them and I am really close to them, we write to each other and they will come to visit me here, I am quite happy with them and there is no question that I would like to have them here to share my difficulties and my experiences with them, I can count on them and they count on me...That’s also how I imagine myself in future friendships being quite close to... keep in touch with them”

Divorced families

S4 (F): “... I think that I am getting older and I try to be less and less dependent on friends ... I don't get close to people because I am self-reliant and I always try to give only the positive side of myself to people ...(p.2)”.

S12 (M): “... there are some close friends... are there?... there are always people around I like to socialise with. I do have some close friends but I don't really know how close I am. I am just as likely to turn to somebody I've known a few moments... (p.3)”.

Most of the participants had close relationships with friends, only four, two male and two female from divorced families reported a detached self.

*Table 11: Individuals from divorced and intact families that reported a detached and not detached self regarding future friendships.*

Intact families Males	Detached self -	Close to friends S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6
Females	-	S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 6/6
Divorced families Males	S8, S12 2/6	S5, S6, S7, S11 4/6
Females	S2, S4 2/6	S1, S3, S9, S10 4/6

**2. Self temporarily involved in friendships**

Some divorcees’ offspring reported that they saw friends in particular contexts and at certain times of life, and that different times were related to different friends. They seemed to believe that friendships did not last for ever and they kept that in mind when they made a new friendship.

Divorced families

S9 (F): “ ... I have two close friends whom I believe will be friends for a long time but I have stopped being so credulous ... you know, to believe that friendships mean love and trust for ever, they do not last for ever and I know that... as you get older you realise that there are other factors that intervene in that .... even with those people I have the feeling that we do not understand each other sometimes... we may not suit each other, so I may make new friends...(p.3)”.

S8 (M): “ ... I see friendships on a daily basis. I have got friends in London now that I do get on very well with ... I used to have close friends in the past ... but I don't know, I hardly think of my friends and what will happen in the future. If I lose contact there are so many that could be my friends... if you lose contact you can make new friends... there is no commitment you can always leave...(p.2)”.

Intact families

S6 (F): “... I keep contact with friends I met twenty years ago when I attended the primary school...we don't meet each other often ... however, it is quite odd... When we see each other it's like being always together, we feel so close, I'm really surprised about this”

S2 (M): “I always try to keep contact with my friends ... for example now... I'm here and one could say that I have new friends here and I don't see my old friends that much, so I don't feel close to them, no... this is not the case... we still keep contact , when I go back I give them a ring on the first day in order to arrange an appointment ... I really miss them...”.

Two of the males and two of the females from divorced families reported themselves being temporarily involved in friendships in the future. This was not the case for any individuals from intact families. They perceived their friends as people constantly available to them, who were a part of their lives and with whom they managed to keep contact even when living away.

*Table 12: Participants from divorced and intact families that reported a temporarily or permanently involved self in future friendships.*

Intact families Males	Temporarily involved in friendships -	Permanently involved in friendships S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6
Females	-	S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 6/6
Divorced families Males	S8, S12 2/6	S5, S6, S7, S11 4/6
Females	S2, S9 2/6	S1, S3, S4, S10 4/6

**Cautious future self regarding friendships**

Concerning future friendships, the category that best distinguished the two groups (offspring of divorced and intact families) concerned the ‘cautious self’. Divorcees’ offspring seemed to be extremely cautious with regard to their friendships. They did not easily trust friends. They stressed their need to assess the other's personality before becoming friends, or to be aware that they had to be careful about any kind of attachment.



Divorced families

S4 (F): “I don't get close enough to people because I'm very self-reliant ... there is a fear I have the fear of intimacy, everybody has a fear of being intimate... I don't want to clutter myself with a lot of friends ... I want to have only few, only those with whom I can be honest and who I can connect with , and with who I am on the same sort of frequency... (p.2)”

S5 (M): “I know that children from divorced families avoid making many friends because of not wanting to let their friends see the home atmosphere and events. This is what happened to me. I selected friends very carefully and I was very close to my friends... but it was very important to me to be very sure about my friends and to have only a few deep friendships... I shall also be very selective with regard to friendships in the future...(p.3)”.

All of the males and five out of the six females from divorced families (the other reported herself not becoming involved in deep friendships and being uninterested in this kind of relationship) reported a cautious self, in making future relationships. This caution had developed through experience. The majority of those from intact families, both males and females, did not report themselves cautious towards people and friends, either new or old ones.

Intact families

S6 (F): “... I usually make friends easily ... I like people ...I might make friends even at the bus-stop, waiting for the bus, this happened once , it was a girl ... I know it sounds odd but that's me”.

S2 (M): “... I like making friends, I really enjoy it ... I like being with people ... this is something I think I got from my father...it might be his job possibly but he is the kind of person who has excellent relationships with everyone in the village ... people come to our shop not necessarily to buy something, they might come to see my father and have a chat with him... that's our family... that's me”.

Only one out of the six females, and two out of the six males, from intact families reported a cautious self (S7) regarding future friendships (see Table 13).

*Table 13: Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to reporting themselves cautious or not regarding their future friendships.*

Intact families Males	Cautious S1, S12 2/6	Not cautious S2, S8, S9, S11 4/6
Females	S7 1/6	S3, S4, S5, S6, S10 5/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S6, S7, S8, S11, S12 6/6	-
Females	S1, S3, S4, S9, S10 5/6	-

### **Self setting conditions on getting involved in friendships**

Closely related to the previous category is that of setting conditions upon friendships. The category emerged from the males (females did not report conditions of friendships but as being flexible with friends) from divorced families who wanted to be close to people only if they believed that the friendship was worthwhile. They did not want to be overwhelmed by friends they were not compatible with and, with whom, they did not communicate well. They wanted to be with people with similar personalities and characteristics and not to bother about people who were different from them.

#### **Divorced families (males)**

S7 (M): "It is of most importance for me to have good communication with my friends... I want them to understand me and my need to be alone some times and not to contact them. Some of my friends get angry with that, but it is very important to me that my friends communicate very well with me and understand what I want and need to do... otherwise I cannot be with them (p.4)".

S6 (M): "... I always want to have close friends... I am more the sort of person that tries to have close friends and not formal friends... I want to have good relations only with people I care about ... being more formal with people I don't care about and being more spontaneous, more close to the ones I want (p.1)... only with people I think I get on with or that I think get along with me in that we share common interests or common thinking ... I don't make friends easily so it is a necessity to be compatible with them... you know it is usually the work environment where I make friends, my colleagues, we go out for beers, we have common interests... (p.2)".

#### **Divorced families (females: flexible with friends)**

S3(F): "I think that I will have all my friends in the future, I am very flexible and I think that this is important for all sort of relationships (p.3)... however, I'd like to think that I will have new friends... I am always like that (p.3)".

A quite interesting difference between the two groups (individuals from intact and divorced families) was that friendships for males from divorced families depended upon their work, or a set of conditions within which a friendship might occur (loyalty, "people I get on with", and people "I have good communication with"). Four out of the six males from divorced families reported such a self. This was not the case for the males from intact families (Table 14). They seemed to be quite open to the possibility of friendship with anyone and they did not report themselves setting any kind of conditions. They were selective in the sense that they wanted their friends to be close to them, and supportive, but they did not set conditions on friendship itself. They liked being close to people who were different from them. They perceived that as a useful experience in their lives.

Intact families

S11 (M): "... I don't mind if I have different kinds of friends... I like being with many people whether I am very close to them or not... I also know that sometimes it is possible not to have interests in common with some people, but I like that. I want to have many people around.. if something wrong happens between us I shall carry on , things will get back to how it was before this argument or whatever... you know.. but of course if I feel I've had enough of it I shall break up".

S2 (M): "... I always remember myself at home living with many people around, there were many friends that came to the house, so I am like that ... I am open to people I think you can learn from everyone, you can always get something positive from anyone ... you know it's up to you to be open to people in order to get the positive things they have to give you... I cannot understand people who say 'I want my friends to be like that' ... no, people are different but you can get on well with people with different personalities ... there is nothing wrong with that... my friends for example vary... they come from different backgrounds and they are not alike but I never thought of them in terms of... I want you to be like this. I choose my friends but I am not that strict, its' silly, isn't it? "

*Table 14 : Males from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they reported themselves setting conditions or not for their future friendships.*

Intact families Males	Setting conditions S1 1/6	Not setting conditions S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 5/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S6, S7, S8 4/6	S11, S12 2/6

**Self open to new friendships**

A similar category concerned differences that emerged only in the two groups of males. Females from both groups were open to establishing new friendships. An indicative statement is given below.

Intact families

S4 (F): "... I have lots of friends... I like meeting new people and making new friendships, I find this a very exciting experience in one's life... it is of most importance for my way of life to meet new people, to come close to them and understand them, their inner world... you know it is a way of living... "

All the males from intact families reported an open self with regard to their eagerness to make new friends from either the same, or different, settings (Table 15).

Intact families

S2 (M): " I like having friends and I'd like to have friends even if they do not come from a similar educational or social level to me ... I still keep my old friends although they do not study any more and they are not well-educated people... I like making friends... I like the company of others in general, exchanging ideas, even having arguments about the ideas each one of us believes in...(p.2)".

This was not the case for males from divorced families.



Divorced families

S7 (M): “ I don't usually make new friends.. I prefer to stay with the ones I have. I feel satisfied with them. I feel secure; there is no reason for me to make new friends... I'd like to make new friends. I don't mean by that I am going to betray my old friends but I think it is good to meet other people and make new friends, but this is not the case with me... (p.6)”.

Some of the males from divorced families reported a "non open-flexible" self in their relationships with others that could lead to friendships. They preferred a few deep friendships rather than being open to new friendships. Half of the divorcees' male offspring were open to friendships, while the rest reported a non-open self.

*Table 15 : Males from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they reported themselves open or not to new friendships.*

Intact families Males	Self open to new friendships S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6	Self not open to new friendships -
Divorced families Males	S6, S11, S12 3/6	S5, S7, S8 3/6

**Summary of the findings regarding possible selves and future friendships**

Table 16 shows the representations of selves reported by participants from divorced and intact families. Overall, divorcees' offspring have more negative representations of selves than those from intact families regarding future friendships. This seems to support the findings of studies focusing on children and adolescent divorcees' offspring regarding interpersonal relationships. Although the evidence is sparse, children in disrupted families tend to experience problems in peer relations (Santrock, 1975). They are less sociable, have fewer friends, spend less time with friends, and participate in fewer shared activities. The findings from the interviews suggest that for some this may continue into early adulthood. It is particularly notable for both sexes with regard to caution in choosing friends and for the males in setting conditions about friendships. Some individuals e.g. S8 and S12 seem to experience a cluster of negative selves in this area relating to distancing themselves from friends. No indication of the motivational power of balanced possible selves was apparent since divorcees' offspring did not report any paired possible selves concerning future friendships.

Table 16: Summary table indicating positive and negative possible selves regarding future friendships.

	<i>D I V O</i>	<i>R C E D</i>	<i>F A M I</i>	<i>L T E S</i>	<i>I N T</i>	<i>A C T</i>	<i>F A M I</i>	<i>L T E S</i>
<i>FRIENDSHIPS</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>
<i>Keen on friendships</i>	<i>S5, S6, S7, S11</i>	<i>S8, S12</i>	<i>S1, S3, S4, S9, S10</i>	<i>S2</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>		<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10</i>	
<i>Close (attached) to friends</i>	<i>S5, S6, S7, S11</i>	<i>S8, S12</i>	<i>S1, S3, S9, S10</i>	<i>S2, S4</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>		<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10</i>	
<i>Self permanently involved in friendships</i>	<i>S5, S6, S7, S11</i>	<i>S8, S12</i>	<i>S1, S3, S4, S10</i>	<i>S2, S9</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>		<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10</i>	
<i>Cautious about choice of friends</i>		<i>S5, S6, S7, S8, S11, S12</i>		<i>S1, S3, S4, S9, S10</i>	<i>S2, S8, S9, S11</i>	<i>S1, S12</i>	<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S10</i>	<i>S7</i>
<i>Undemanding with people/ friends</i>	<i>S11, S12</i>	<i>S5, S6, S7, S8</i>			<i>S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>	<i>S1</i>		
<i>Self open to new friendships</i>	<i>S6, S11, S12</i>	<i>S5, S7, S8</i>			<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>			

## OCCUPATIONAL LIFE

Participants' answers to questions regarding their future occupational life were related to both occupational relationships and their career- occupational development.

### Relationships with colleagues

#### **Self open to further socialisation with colleagues**

This category distinguished the two groups (individuals from divorced and intact families) according to their eagerness, and openness to make friends in the working environment, and according to whether the relationship they wanted to have with their colleagues was a formal occupational one or friendly. It was apparent from the divorce sample that almost all the interviewees were particularly interested in good but formal occupational relationships, and they did not anticipate, or expect, any other kind of relationship with their colleagues.

#### Divorced families

S1 (F): "... I just imagine professional relationships with colleagues... not particularly close, just being quite friendly at work, probably nothing much beyond that. I do not expect any more... I mean other sort of relationships...(p.2)"

S12 (M): "... I don't want to be close to... so much... you know friendly relationship... but not completely. It could possibly become a bit claustrophobic, if you started working and playing with the same people. That would be bad. But it would be nice if you can occasionally. If something cropped up, it would be nice to go to the pub with them once a week.... but no more, you know...(p.4)".

Four out of the six males and four out of the six females from divorced families reported themselves mainly interested in good but formal occupational relationships. Only one male, and two females divorcees' offspring reported an open self towards making friendships in the work environment. This was not the case for participants from intact families. The majority of them seemed to look forward to making friends in their occupational environment (Table 17).

#### Intact families

S5 (F): "... I'd like to have good formal occupational relationships with my colleagues, but you know... I'd also like to have friends in that environment. It doesn't mean that if I hadn't this could be painful for me but I'd like to have .... This is not a condition but it is a good environment for someone to work... if I managed to have good occupational relationships I would be quite happy ”.

S9 (M): “ ... I want to have good co-operation with my colleagues... it is very important to me...Apart from that I would like to have friends from my occupational environment because I would discuss with them common issues and interests... you know common experiences ... this could be very helpful to me,.... I think so ...(p.5)”.

Four males and five females, from intact families perceived themselves open to making friends in their occupational environment and they suggested that it would be for their own good. Males from intact families related relationships with colleagues to common interests they would share with them while females mentioned having a happy occupational atmosphere. This may reflect gender differences regarding males' and females' occupational orientation to social life.

*Table 17: Individuals from intact and divorced families who reported themselves open or not to make friends in the occupational environment.*

Intact families Males	Close relationships with colleagues S2, S8, S9, S11 4/6	Formal occupational relationships S1, S12 2/6
Females	S3, S4, S5, S6, S10 5/6	S7 1/6
Divorced families Males	S11 1/6	S5, S7, S8, S12 4/6
Female	S4, S10 2/6	S1, S2, S3, S9 4/6

#### **Unstable self in future occupational relationships**

This category contrasted participants from divorced and intact families in terms of the stability of occupational relationships. Some from divorced families saw relationships as temporary and



dependent on the other person in the relationship. Behaviour changed depending on information received from colleagues on an everyday basis.

Divorced families

S2 (F): "... I just think about this like... well, I'm getting on with them today but I don't know if I can imagine how I might respond to them in the future, it is the everyday things that matters and that's what I can see..."

S6 (M): " ...Relationships with colleagues I think is something that always changes. It is the attitude to somebody you have and his attitude to you that defines whether you are likeable or not. This is dynamic, you always concentrate on what your aims and your wishes are in your social life and you react to them according to your aims and the goals you set ... it has to do with the feedback you get.... I mean the everyday life experiences (p.2)".

All the individuals (both males and females) from intact families reported having stability regarding future relationships with colleagues (Table 18).

Intact families

S6 (F): "... I usually have close relationships with my colleagues, we arrange meetings, we go to pubs etc, I ring them not very often but quite often. I cannot say I socialize with all my colleagues but there are a lot with whom I get on very well... I cannot see any reason to interrupt these relationships. Some of them are really lovely... they are valuable friends and I am quite sure that this is going to be the case in the future... why not?"

S2 (M): " ... my colleagues are quite nice but I am student at the moment... imagining myself in the future working on research I am sure that some of my colleagues are going to be interesting and stimulating people... such people are quite important in one's life... I can see myself being close to them and you know ... I have learned from my family life that keeping friends is very important in our lives. For example, now I am close to my peers for so many years and I am sure that we will keep contact in the future.... The occupational environment will be quite pleasant if colleagues are friends..."

Overall, most participants appear to experience and foresee a continuation of positive possible selves in relationships at work.

*Table 18: Participants from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they reported a stable self or not with regard to their future occupational relationships.*

Intact families	Unstable self	Stable self
Males	-	S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6
Females	-	S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 6/6
Divorced families	S6	S5, S7, S8, S11, S12
Males	1/6	5/6
Females	S2	S1, S3, S4, S9, S10
	1/6	5/6

*Summary of the findings regarding possible selves and future relationships with colleagues*

Most of the participants report positive future selves in relationships with colleagues at work, although there is a tendency for those from divorced families to be more keen on formal relationships, less open to future relationships and more uncertain about work relationships (Table 19).

*Table 19: Summary table indicating males and females from divorced and intact families who reported positive and negative possible selves regarding future relationships with colleagues.*

	<i>DIVO</i>	<i>RCED</i>	<i>FAMI</i>	<i>LTES</i>	<i>INT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>FAMI</i>	<i>LTES</i>
<i>RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>
<i>Self open to further relationships with colleagues</i>	<i>S11</i>	<i>S5, S7, S8, S12</i>	<i>S4, S10</i>	<i>S1, S2, S3, S9</i>	<i>S2, S8, S9, S11</i>	<i>S1, S12</i>	<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S10</i>	<i>S7</i>
<i>Stable self with regard to future relationships with colleagues</i>	<i>S5, S7, S8, S11, S12</i>	<i>S6</i>	<i>S1, S3, S4, S9, S10</i>	<i>S2</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>		<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10</i>	

**Occupation/ career**

**Self avoiding competition**

Closely related to relationships at work were worries about a highly competitive occupational environment. This was something that neither participants from intact families nor those from divorced families wanted to have. However, divorcees' offspring set a prerequisite condition to accepting work, which was that there should be no highly competitive element in the occupational environment. There were no gender differences.

**Divorced families**

S4 (F): “ I want to have good communication and a feeling of exchanging ideas and growing together and knowing each other.. I really dislike environments where people pretend... are isolated... I cannot stand such situations and also situations of exploitation, I may scream, I will get very nasty ...p. 3)”.

S5 (M): “ ...Bad working environments could affect me to such an extent that I would leave. I mean that I would avoid choosing a job where colleagues' relationships are so bad. I'd like to escape from such an environment...”.

Four out of the six females and three out of the six males, from divorced families reported the need to work in a friendly environment, without competition as a condition of work. The rest

(three males and two females) from divorced families did not mention anything about competition in the working environment. Individuals from intact families wanted to work in a co-operative and non-antagonistic environment, but none of them made this a condition for his/her work place (Table 20).

Intact families

S5 (F): “ ... I don't think an antagonistic environment would be very bad for me ... I have never thought of that but I think that it could be a good motivation for me ... I think so, I am not afraid of that...”.

S9 (M): “ ...I hope for good co-operation with them... I want a dynamic relationship in my working environment .... I want to have comments on my work, even bad, although it hurts sometimes... you know....but I can see myself in a highly competitive occupational environment ... I will not give up, I'd like to fight for something...p. 4)”.

Only one female (S3) from an intact family reported a requirement of a none competitive spirit in the occupational environment. All of them reported, that if they had to work in such an environment they would cope, and that it could possibly increase their motivation.

*Table 20: Males and females from intact and divorced families who reported a self avoiding competition in their occupational environments.*

Intact families Males	Avoiding competition (condition for the occupational environment) -	Avoiding competition (wish/ not condition for their occupational life) S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6
Females	S3 1/6	S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 5/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S7, S12 3/6	-
Females	S3, S4, S9, S10 4/6	-

**Alternative selves with regard to choices of occupation**

This category emerged in relation to adaptability in occupation. All the females from intact families suggested that they could be flexible enough to do another job if circumstances prevented them doing the job they wanted to.



#### Intact families

S4 (F): “ .. I have some qualifications so I shall have some sort of job in my life. If I cannot work as a lecturer I may do other things ... I don't worry if things do not happen as they should....(p.5)”.

This was not the case for the majority of females from divorced families, who seemed to have a clear-cut career plan, and did not mention anything about alternative work.

#### Divorced families

S2 (F):" ... this is my life, this is my work, I cannot imagine myself doing something else except music... I've written some pieces and I am working towards that...”.

The situation was not so clear for males. Three out of the six males from divorced families reported themselves as being flexible about trying different things in their career. Two reported themselves being inflexible, while one did not provide any information relevant to this category. This finding tends to suggest that females from divorced families are more determined to have the career they have planned or worked towards.

*Table 21: Individuals from intact and divorced families who reported a flexible (willing to have alternative jobs)/ inflexible self regarding their choice or involvement in a certain occupation in the future.*

Intact families Males	Alternative selves in career S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12 6/6	Inflexible self regarding future occupation -
Females	S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 6/6	-
Divorced families Males	S5, S11, S12 3/6	S7, S8 2/6
Females	S4, S10 2/6	S1, S2, S3, S9 4/6

#### **Self having control over future career-occupational life**

This category emerged relating to control, or lack of control over career-occupation situation. The information provided by interviewees was related to whether they believed that they could control, and intervene in situations so as to achieve the desired outcome, in their occupational situation. The majority of males and females from intact families reported a positive representation of self regarding being in control of their future occupational life.

Intact families

S6 (F): “I believe that when you control yourself you can control the situation as well... not being dependent on something else... not saying it is not my fault: it's a situation, it's out of my control... you know if something goes wrong... to make decisions of your life, to take your life in your hands....this is the best self for me, it is the thing I want to manage to do perfectly in the future (p.1).... I believe in myself, I have the qualifications I need in order to have my own business ....(p.5)”.

S2 (M): “I have just started my Ph.D now... to what extent I shall see all my dreams become reality depends basically on me and my efforts... I know that there are circumstances I can not have control over, but that is something beyond me. What counts for me is my efforts and I have succeeded to a great extent in my studies and all the career steps I have made... (p.4)”.

Two thirds of males and females from intact families reported an internal locus of control with regard to their future career situation. Half of divorcees’ offspring, both males and females reported a negative representation of self regarding being in control of their future occupation (Table 22). They seemed to believe that the only situations over which they have control are those which involve only themselves personally. Overall there was little difference between the groups regarding their perception of control of future career situations.

Divorced families

S4 (F): “... the thing most likely to happen for me in the future is my relationship with myself, because I have no control over where I am going to work or what country I am going to live in or my entire environment I like... I don't have a lot of control over that...it is something that does not depend on me so, I can't do too much about that, I don't think it is possible for things to change in the future... (p.4)”.

S5 (M): “I think I can manage to succeed in my career to the extent the situation depends on me but... I'm sure there are other factors which mediate my success ... I can't say yes... that's it, I got it... it might be easy, it might not... I don't know really... it's also external factors, isn't ? (p.5)”

*Table 22: Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to the locus of control they reported regarding their career.*

Intact families Males	Internal locus of control S1, S2, S8, S9 4/6	External locus of control S11, S12 2/6
Females	S4, S5, S6, S10 4/6	S3, S7 2/6
Divorced families Males	S6, S11, S12 3/6	S5, S7, S8 3/6
Females	S2, S3, S10 3/6	S1, S4, S9 3/6

## **Ambitious self**

This category emerged to describe the desire for career success, to achieve high standards, or to have a high status job. Focus on career and value on this more than on other aspects of life, or a lack of ambition emerged in this category.

### Intact families (ambitious)

S2 (M): “ I can see myself working in a University as a lecturer, taking over research projects and carrying out research in different fields. I know that I can succeed and I am almost there, I know I have a long way to go but I also at the same time can see myself deeply involved in that”.

S5 (F): “ I cannot say that academia is the only career plan for me. I know it is difficult to have access to this place but I know I can do many other things related to education which can give me a better salary and a better social status than a simple teacher... But I never of course deny the possibility of getting involved in an academic career. You know I'd like to... but if it does not come up I will find something else quite interesting to do ... something that motivates me”.

### Intact families (not ambitious)

S11 (M): “... work is something important in one's life... ok, it does not mean that all my life is going to be dedicated to my work, I don't think of myself involved in a University career, I mean teaching or doing research. I don't mean that I wouldn't like it but I have already thought of other things which may give me money, experience but not necessarily a high social status. Life is simple, isn't it... or ... anyway it could be simple... I could go to work in foreign country where I could have a lot of money and experience... imagine Africa... it will be wonderful, what an experience...”

S3 (F): “ ... first of all I disagree with the term career, I cannot understand such life plans, living to succeed etc... it's not me. I want to have an easy life, I want to explore the life, the nature, to enjoy my being. I will work for living, not living for working... (p.5)”

•

An equal number of individuals from intact families reported themselves as ambitious or not ambitious. This was not the case for individuals from divorced families. The majority of them reported themselves oriented towards career (Table 23).

### Divorced families (ambitious)

S8 (M): “... my work is the priority in my life, I think... you may say that it is because of my parents divorce that I do not trust partner and family, I don't know, I don't care. I started looking for a post as a banker... I also like theoretical mathematics... I could be a crazy lonely mathematician, exploring and inventing new equations, try to solve them etc... I told you I am a strange person. However, you know there is always a financial problem I can't live without money so if I find a job as a banker I will work there but maths is still my love. I am sure I can get job as a manager, I have the qualifications... I can imagine myself dressed in suits with ties and joining parties of millionaires etc... working for them etc. Anyway, ... each one of the above options has its own benefits for me. Both of them seem to stimulate me”.

S2 (F): “ ... work is my main concern at the moment... I'm always thinking of myself being in charge of music and all the relative activities in schools, I don't know whether I am capable or not to do that but I'd like to ... that's my dream, that's my future image of self if you want. However, I quite often worry about that and the possibility to get on with all these... we'll see...”



Five out of the six females and four out of the six males from divorced families perceived themselves as "high flyers". Half of those from intact families reported not being ambitious.

*Table 23: Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they reported themselves ambitious or not about their career.*

Intact families Males	Ambitious S1, S2, S9 3/6	Not ambitious S8, S11, S12 3/6
Females	S5, S7, S10 3/6	S3, S4, S6 3/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S7, S8, S11 4/6	S6, S12 2/6
Females	S1, S2, S3, S9, S10 5/6	S4 1/6

The findings were of particular interest when it came to priorities set by participants regarding career and family (see Table 24). The differences were marked for the females. This may reflect components of their gender identity and their perceived dual role regarding occupational life and household responsibilities. Females from intact families reported a role as spouses and mothers. This was not the case for those from divorced families, they emphasized career.

#### Intact families

S5 (F): "... I have to say that I want to succeed in my career but it is not the key to happiness... I am aware of that... I imagine myself in University, giving lectures etc. but I have to say that I am not going to sacrifice my personal life for my career... I am here for my Ph.D and my personal life is quite good but in so far as I realise that things go bad and the distance creates problems I will not risk my relationships... (p.7)"

#### Divorced families

S2 (F): "... I want to have a good career. I want to be a composer , I want to get my Ph.D and this is my first concern because that's what I am working on... I don't want to have a family, I don't want to have children, that's what I mean, I want to be on my own and that's how I want to see myself... I only think about my work... all I think is about my work and what I want is my work, so I think about it (p.1)".

All the females from intact families reported that they would like to be happy with both family and career but that if they had to choose they would set more value on their personal life in terms of achieving a happy family life (their priorities are depicted in Table 24). All the females from divorced families reported that they did not believe in the idea of family since this did not seem to be possible in most cases. Since they did not control the intra-family environment, they felt

more confident of succeeding in their career where they believed that they had more control over the situation. Half of the females reported career as the main priority in their lives. One reported taking care of self as the main priority in her life.

*Table 24: Females from intact and divorced families categorised according to the priorities they set in their life regarding family and career.*

Intact families Females	Family S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10 6/6	Career -	Family and career -	Self -
Divorced families Females	-	S1, S2, S9 3/6	S3, S10 2/6	S4 -

Only two female divorcees' offspring (S3, S10) set great value upon their family life. They also reported an occupation priority which they worked towards and which they saw as more likely to be possible than a family.

S3 (F): "... overall I think work is my priority ... at the moment I' m still studying, so it is my work that I am really concerned with ... later on... I think ...yes... I'd like to have my own family, but if I had to choose between career and family I would choose career ... it's a self-reliant thing...isn't it?... but you know, overall, career and family are linked to each other, I think I will strive to have both of them, to live good composition of them...(p.4)".

One female from a divorced family reported that the only priority in her life was herself.

S4 (F): "... I don't think that I'll get married ever in my life. There is no such possibility I think, and I really don't care... it's my spiritual life, by body and my social life that attract my interest at the moment. I don't see myself being a mother, I don't care about being in that role. Life is full of experiences, I enjoy it in different ways... so I cannot see the reason for such a choice of way of living... some people say that their work is what they mostly care about, I never thought that this might be a crucial aspect of my life, that's why I don't have a permanent job. I work for sometime, I travel and when I run out of money I look again for a job... it sounds strange I know, but you know... that's me... "

**Confident self regarding future occupational life**

In this category participants were coded according to whether they perceived themselves as succeeding in their career. Almost all the interviewees, four out of the six males and five out of the six females, from intact families reported that they were confident of succeeding in their career (Table 25).

Intact families

S3 (F): “ Regarding my studies and my career I feel perfectly capable, like I feel about family or for any other life activity It's a matter of time and fixing everything and getting everything together and getting everything organised... (p.6) .... If I enjoy it I'll do it, I know that very well(p.7)”.

S2 (M): “ .. about my work it's like with my family... I mean I feel very confident... I see myself succeeding as a researcher, as a teacher... it's my effort that is going to make things work... let's say that I fail although I've tried very hard... what counts for me is the effort, and I feel perfectly capable of making the effort. That's why I feel confident...(p.4)”.

Males and females from divorced families seemed to have a negative image of self regarding being successful at work or they blamed themselves for actions and decisions they made over time. This applied to males and females.

Divorced families

S1 (F): “ I think of myself negatively... that I can still be quite an indecisive person and in the future I probably will be indecisive about what am I going to be doing. I can still be quite insecure in myself and having a general feeling that I haven't achieved much (p.2)... I am afraid that by the time I am a music teacher or a lecturer my abilities aren't going to be good enough for the job. I mean ... this is a stupid worry but you know. I feel as if a music teacher has so many stresses you know extra curricular activities which they have to go to together... sometimes I'm afraid ... I just want to be able to cope with all the things and activities. That's my basic fear(p.2,3)”.

S5 (M): “ I am unsatisfied to a great extent ... my career should have started earlier .. at the moment I am not very confident about what I do. I don't believe that I do everything in the best way although I do my best but... I hope ... I think at the end everything will be O.K.”.

Half of the males and females from divorced families reported a non confident self.

*Table 25 : Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to whether they reported themselves confident or not regarding their career.*

Intact families Males	Confident S1, S2, S8, S9 4/6	Unconfident S11, S12 2/6
Females	S3, S4, S5, S6, S10 5/6	S7 1/6
Divorced families Males	S6, S8, S11 3/6	S5, S7, S12 3/6
Females	S2, S3, S10 3/6	S1, S4, S9 3/6



Summary of the findings regarding possible selves and future occupation/ career

Table 26: Summary table indicating positive and negative (in bold characters) possible selves regarding future occupation/ career.

	<i>DIVO</i>	<i>RCED</i>	<i>FAMI</i>	<i>LTES</i>	<i>INT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>FAMI</i>	<i>LTES</i>
<i>OCCUPATION/ CAREER</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Females</i>
<i>Perceiving competition as unfavourable but able to survive</i>		<i>S5, S7, S12</i>		<i>S3, S4, S9, S10</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>		<i>S4, S5, S6, S7, S10</i>	<i>S3</i>
<i>Determined/Inflexible with regard to choices of a occupation</i>	<i>S7, S8</i>	<i>S5, S11, S12</i>	<i>S1, S2, S3, S9</i>	<i>S4, S10</i>		<i>S1, S2, S8, S9, S11, S12</i>		<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10</i>
<i>Self having control over future career-occupational life</i>	<i>S6, S11, S12</i>	<i>S5, S7, S8</i>	<i>S2, S3, S10</i>	<i>S1, S4, S9</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9</i>	<i>S11, S12</i>	<i>S4, S5, S6, S10</i>	<i>S3, S7</i>
<i>Ambitious of career</i>	<i>S5, S7, S8, S11</i>	<i>S6, S12</i>	<i>S1, S2, S3, S9, S10</i>	<i>S4</i>	<i>S1, S2, S9</i>	<i>S8, S11, S12</i>	<i>S5, S7, S10</i>	<i>S3, S4, S6</i>
<i>Confident self regarding succeeding in career</i>	<i>S6, S8, S11</i>	<i>S5, S7, S12</i>	<i>S2, S3, S10</i>	<i>S1, S4, S9</i>	<i>S1, S2, S8, S9</i>	<i>S11, S12</i>	<i>S3, S4, S5, S6, S10</i>	<i>S7</i>

Summarising the findings of the interviews regarding the representations of selves reported by individuals from divorced and intact families concerning their future occupation/ career, there are few clearly identifiable trends (Table 26). Generally, divorcees' female offspring (S2, S3) reported less negative representations of selves than their counterparts from intact families regarding their future occupation. This may indicate that they are more career oriented than their counterparts from intact families. Those from divorced families seemed to be more concerned about having to work in a very competitive environment, less flexible with regard to choices of occupation, more ambitious and less confident.

LEISURE

The interview information indicated differences only between females in relation to leisure activities. The activities were related to physical exercise, or a preference for being on their own rather than joining a group for leisure. Males did not mention any individual oriented activities. All of them reported themselves engaged in a variety of activities both individualistic and social.

### **Social activities**

#### **Divorced families**

S9 (F): "I usually prefer social activities, going out and stay late in the night with my peers, you know students from the University. I cannot stay home too long, enjoyment for me is to go bars, pubs etc..."

#### **Intact families**

S10 (F): "I love going on excursions, going abroad, having fun with friends... I have visited so many places and I have friends around the world with whom I have a really nice time"

### **Individual and social activities**

#### **Divorced families**

S3 (F): "I am a kind of person who has many friends so I usually go out with them and spend time with them, chatting, discussing. I really enjoy my friends they are a valuable part of my life... Sometimes I want to be alone, I am not a lonely person but it depends... there are moments that I want to be only me and myself I want to do nothing just to think of life, of everything..."

#### **Intact families**

S3 (F): "my friends say that I'm a strange person, I love being with them and I keep contact with most of them for ages now... whenever I have free time I usually invite them at home and cook for them... it is not only this. Sometimes I am a kind of isolated person, I want to stay at home to write my diary and this may takes hours and hours but I enjoy it so much, as much as my friends' company (p.5)"

However, the difference between individuals from divorced and intact families is reflected in the category concerning individual activities. These are reported only by divorcees' female offspring who seem to concentrate on leisure activities they undertake alone.

#### **Divorced families (females who reported individuals activities)**

S1 (F): "at the moment about leisure... my pursuit tend to be totally musical. I play the piano and sing in choirs and go to concerts. This is mainly what I do, my music is so important... (p.3)"

S2 (F): "...I enjoy my music, my music is my leisure, so outside my music, I don't think there is any different leisure activity. I said my music, my music is everything because it's my life. I've evolved around my music and my music has evolved with me so, that's all I think about it. I'm wrapped up by my music... I don't think of anything else besides that (p.2)"

S4 (F): "My leisure is to take really good care of my body, and that's my most time consuming preoccupation, to spend over 3 hours a day exercising and it's not enough ... just thinking of my leisure time, the more time, I spend balancing my body.... that's the best thing I can do (p.3)".

None of the females from intact families reported their leisure time as taken up with activities undertaken alone. Half of the female sample (3/6) from divorced families reported that they preferred spending leisure time doing individual activities (Table 27). The importance of this was emphasised by the fact that two of them reported that their work was their leisure (S1, S2).

*Table 27: Males and females from intact and divorced families categorised according to the way they preferred to spend their leisure time.*

Intact families Males	Social S8, S11, S12 3/6	Individual -	Individual and social S1, S2, S9 3/6
Females	S7, S10 2/6	-	S3, S4, S5, S6 4/6
Divorced families Males	S5, S12 2/6	-	S6, S7, S8, S11, S12 5/6
Females	S9, S10 2/6	S1, S2, S4 3/6	S3 1/6

Although Table 27 does not provide any detailed information regarding divorcees' offspring's representations of selves concerning future preferences for activities shared with others, it gives some hints of divorcees' female offsprings' withdrawal from social activities. This could be related to their representations regarding future friendships. Earlier research has indicated that individuals from divorced families are less sociable and participate in fewer shared activities (Santrock, 1975; Peterson and Zill, 1986; Chase-Landsdale and Hetherington, 1990).



## CHAPTER 7

### EXPLORING THE DIVORCE CIRCUMSTANCES AS THEY RELATE TO THE POSSIBLE SELVES REPORTED BY DIVORCEES' OFFSPRING.

#### *Positive possible selves and demographic-background variables relating to divorcees' offspring life in relation to parental divorce.*

A first attempt to explore the relationship between possible selves and the circumstances of parental divorce required identification of the relations between background variables (offspring's age when the divorce occurred, the number of years since the divorce, the custodial parent's gender, the non custodial parent's educational level) relating to the divorce situation and the positive possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring. It should be taken into account that the sample was small and the analysis could not provide any definite conclusions. Only a loose analysis of the data could be carried out (Table 28). The analysis of the interview data indicated that the majority of divorcees' offspring mainly reported negative possible selves. Consequently, it was interesting for the study to identify the events of parental divorce reported by those who described positive possible selves. The choice of positive rather than negative possible selves to explore the influence of parental divorce on possible selves related to one of the aims of the research which was to explore ways of promoting positive outcomes for the offspring of divorcees rather than negative. The circumstances of the divorce scenario which do not negatively influence offspring therefore need to be brought to the attention of parents and practitioners.

Two different approaches to coding possible selves as positive or negative could have been employed:

- coding according to whether the particular possible self promoted the development of any of the aspects of life explored in the study (regarding future family, friendships, occupational life and leisure)
- coding according to whether the possible selves were perceived by participants as desired (positive) or not

It is suggested that the best way possible selves can be coded under a dichotomous code: positive-negative is to 'judge' them with criteria regarding how positive these qualities would be for

divorcees' offspring's future family, friendships, occupational life and leisure. This was defined in terms of individuals' representations of selves regarding developing and succeeding in any of the above mentioned aspects of life. If one followed the second approach presented above, the comparison between the two groups (individuals from divorced families compared to their counterparts from intact families) would be impossible since some representations of selves perceived as desired by one group were perceived as undesired by the other. For example, representation of self regarding being an overprotective parent would be coded as positive for divorcees' offspring while as negative for individuals from intact families since divorcees' offspring perceived themselves obliged to protect their children and control their lives in order for them to avoid frustrating experiences. Their personal experience of parental divorce lead to such a view while individuals from intact families perceived overprotection as an inappropriate practice for bringing up children.

From this perspective, the possible selves relating to future family life, reflecting a happy, family oriented self were coded as positive in terms of orientation to family life (the ideal self was not taken into account in the analysis since it was perhaps an unrealistic self, as no practical steps were reported as a way of achieving it). Regarding friendships, the representations of selves related to eagerness for close and consistent friendships were coded as positive.

Possible selves concerning future occupational life had two aspects:

- a. *Occupational relationships*. These concerned individuals being open to further socialisation with colleagues (to get close to them and become friends). These were coded as positive possible selves.
- b. *Occupation/ career* oriented representations of selves. These seemed to facilitate development of occupational life. These were coded as positive.

Table 28 presents the number of positive possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring. The fractions represent the proportion of *positive* possible selves out of the whole number of possible selves (both positive and negative) reported by each of the participants. For example, the first participant reported three positive possible selves out of the eight possible selves he described regarding his future family.

**Table 28: Number of positive possible selves reported by each of the divorcees' offspring, combined with background information regarding parental divorce.**

Males	Age when divorce happened	Years passed since parental divorce	Custodial parent	Non custodial parent's educational level	Positive possible selves regarding family	Positive possible selves regarding friendships	Positive possible selves regarding relationships with colleagues	Positive possible selves regarding occupation career	Possible selves regarding leisure activities
S5	20	9	mother	Up to A levels	3/8 (37.5%)	3/6 (50%)	½ (50%)	1/5 (20%)	
S6	24	4	mother	High	3/8 (37.5%)	4/6 (66%)	–	2/3 (66%)	
S7	10	14	mother-remarried	High	3/8 (37.5%)	3/6 (50%)	½ (50%)	2/5 (40%)	
S8	4	25	mother-remarried	High	3/8 (37.5%)	–	½ (50%)	3/4 (75%)	
S11	6	18	mother-remarried	High	5/6 (83%)	5/6 (83%)	2/2 (100%)	3/4 (75%)	
S12	14	11	mother	Up to A levels	5/7 (71%)	2/6 (33%)	½ (50%)	1/5 (20%)	
Females									
S1	8	17	father	High	3/12 (25%)	3/4 (75%)	½ (50%)	2/4 (50%)	individual
S2	15	12	father	Up to A levels	3/11 (27%)	–	–	4/4 (100%)	individual
S3	5	21	mother-remarried	High	6/12 (50%)	3/4 (75%)	½ (50%)	4/5 (80%)	individual + social
S4	15	20	father	Up to A levels	3/12 (25%)	2/4 (50%)	2/2 (100%)	–	individual
S9	4	22	mother	High	5/12 (41%)	2/4 (75%)	½ (50%)	2/5 (40%)	social
S10	16	18	mother	Up to A levels	8/12 (75%)	3/4 (75%)	2/2 (100%)	3/5 (60%)	social

Looking at the background variables in Table 28, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the role played by the age of participants when the divorce took place. No pattern of positive possible selves appears to be related to individuals' age when parental divorce took place. However, focusing on the males who were mature when their parents' divorce occurred (S5, S6) it is notable that both seem to have been affected greatly particularly in relation to their future family life. Perhaps parental divorce does not have a less detrimental effect on mature divorcees' offspring.



Possible selves regarding future friendships are also not influenced by the age variable. Career-wise, males whose parents were divorced when they were very young reported more positive possible selves regarding their future occupation than the others (Table 28). Perhaps when they grew up, family life had been balanced in terms of the establishment of a new structure and hierarchy. The mother might also have adjusted to the new situation which enabled her to adopt effective discipline practices. In the females, there is no clear pattern in the positive possible selves they reported with regard to their future occupation. No pattern of positive possible selves regarding future relationships with colleagues or leisure activities was found in relation to the age of the participants when the divorce took place.

When the data were considered in relation to the residential parent's gender, it was apparent that females who lived with the father after the divorce reported fewer positive possible selves with regard to their future family life (Table 28). This may indicate a negative influence when the father is the custodial parent of female offspring. This supports earlier findings (Kelly, 1988; Lindsay Chase-Landsdale and Hetherington, 1990). However, it is not clear whether it is the presence of the father or the absence of the mother that makes the difference. No males reported themselves living with the father after the divorce. Representations of selves regarding friendships and occupational life reported by divorcees' offspring, do not seem to be related to the gender of the custodial parent. However, females living with the father after the divorce reported an individual oriented self in leisure activities.

There is no clear trend regarding the marital status of the custodial parent, relating to possible selves for future family life (Table 28). This does not support the role-model hypothesis, which follows from Pope and Mueller's (1976) finding of no significant transmission of marital instability difference as a function of whether the child lived with a single rather than a remarried natural parent or a parent of the opposite sex (Greenberg and Nay, 1982, p.344). No clear trend was indicated in the possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding future friendships and relationships with colleagues, according to the custodial parent's marital status. However, regarding divorcees' offspring representations of selves concerning career, the majority of those living with stepparents were more career oriented than those whose custodial parent was not remarried. Such a finding supports studies suggesting a relation between hierarchical authority

relations in family and offspring's occupational life (Nock, 1988).

No recent (in the last two years, as defined in the literature e.g. Johnson, 1986) experience of parental divorce was reported by any of the participants so no effects of the time passed since parental separation on divorcees' offspring representations of selves can be considered.

Summarising, it seems that divorcees' female offspring living with their fathers have been negatively affected by their parents' divorce with regard to the possible selves they report about their future family life. Also, almost all individuals whose custodial parent was remarried were more positive regarding their future career than those who lived in a single-parent family. The individual's age when parental divorce occurred does not appear to play a role in representations of selves. However, these findings should be treated with caution because of the small number of participants. They should be perceived as exploratory, aiming to develop ideas for the questionnaire.

Regarding the influence of non-custodial parent's educational level on offspring's possible selves, there is some indication that males whose non-custodial parents were educated only to an intermediate level (less than 'A-levels'), reported few positive possible selves regarding future friendships and career (Table 28). As the non-custodial parent was the father, this may relate to a lack of concern and rare contact with the father as reported by the majority of the studies considering the non-custodial parent's concern about the children in the period after the divorce (Emery, 1980). This may also be related to the offspring's lack of experience of hierarchical authority relations and discipline (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Furstenberg and Spanier, 1984; Nock, 1988) which may make them cautious of developing friendships.

Information about the circumstances of the divorce and perceptions of it showed no clear trends when considered in relation to possible selves. In part this was due to the small sample size and also to the relatively few possible selves emerging. Those trends which did emerge related mainly to occupational life and to a lesser extent to family and friends.

Table 29: Circumstances of parental divorce reported by divorcees' offspring and the nature of possible selves they reported regarding future career, family, and friendships (the positive possible selves are underlined).

Circumstances of parental divorce	Career	Family	Friendships	Leisure
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Unhappy pre-divorce family life			<u>positive</u>	
2. Clearly/strong positive relationship Relatively positive relationship with the custodial parent	<u>positive</u>	<u>positive</u>	negative	<u>positive</u>
3. Quite but not very close relationship with the stepfather Very close relationship with the stepfather	<u>positive</u>	<u>positive</u>		<u>positive</u>
4. Negative relationship with the non-custodial parent		negative		
5. Periodical contact Rare contact No contact with the non-custodial parent	<u>positive</u>			<u>positive</u>
6. Quite unhappy-distant relationship with the partner of the non-custodial parent		<u>positive</u>		
7. Active involvement in parental divorce			<u>positive</u>	
8. Parents avoided talking about the divorce		<u>positive</u>		
9. Parents had no contact after the divorce		<u>positive</u>		
10. Reason for the divorce: personalities clashed Personality clashed and adultery			negative	<u>positive</u>
11. Living through marital discord		negative		
12. Living with the same parent, not obliged to visit the non-custodial parent Obliged to visit the non-custodial parent			<u>positive</u>	<u>positive</u>
13. Blame both parents for the divorce		negative		
14. Intrafamily-support No support	negative	negative	negative	

Table 29 indicates the circumstances/experiences of parental divorce reported by divorcees' offspring and the nature of the majority of possible selves they reported in relation to them. The positive and negative possible selves, reported in the table, set out tendencies in the nature of possible selves. The process followed for the identification of a tendency was the following:

- identification of circumstances of divorce reported by more than two individuals
- identification of the number of positive possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring who experienced a certain event
- where more than a half of the overall number of possible selves relating to a certain aspect of



life were of the same nature, a tendency was indicated towards positive or negative possible selves.

It is notable that the representations of selves described by divorcees' offspring concerning their future family life, were generally negative, though in a few cases they reported positive experiences (Table 29). The females who described a *relatively* positive relationship with the custodial parent indicated positive representations of selves regarding their future family life. Perhaps they empathised with their mothers, appreciating their efforts and sacrifices, and their struggle to survive the divorce and bring up children by themselves (Gately and Schwebel, 1992). It is interesting that those who experienced an *clearly/strong* positive relationship with the custodial parent reported negative possible selves in relation to family. This would suggest that it is not the nature of the child-custodial parent relationship that matters but other factors e.g. gender of the custodial parent. Positive possible selves concerning family, friendships and socially oriented leisure activities were reported by those females who were not obliged to visit their non-custodial parent. Perhaps this indicates offspring's need to detach themselves from a person to whom they do not feel close particularly where his leaving was perceived as a rejection. The literature indicates that children are aware of a father's lack of concern for them and experience this as rejection (Cockett and Tripp, 1994). Overall, it could be cautiously suggested that divorce has negative effects on the representations of selves relating to future family life, especially for males, who regardless of their perception of the nature of the event reported less positive possible selves regarding future family life. This may indicate a mediating gender factor. Perhaps females are more oriented than males to the family and define themselves to a greater extent in this environment (Curry et al, 1994).

Regarding the representations of selves reported by divorcees' offspring about their future careers, relationships with the persons with whom they lived (*custodial parent and stepparent*) was related to positive possible selves concerning this aspect of life (Table 29). This possibly lends support to the literature on hierarchy issues and discipline practices, which are impaired in the majority of the cases, where the male figure is missing (Nock, 1988). Where a lack of family support was reported by divorcees' offspring (males and females) it was related to negative representations of selves regarding future occupation. Furthermore, where females experienced a generally

negative relationship with the non-custodial parent and blamed both parents for the divorce, this negatively affected their representations of selves regarding future career/ occupation. This may be related to a lack of respect of their parents and subsequent challenges to the powerful role of their parents in their lives.

Positive representations of self regarding future friendships reported by male offspring appeared to be related to negative circumstances in the divorce scenario e.g. unhappy pre-divorce family life (Table 29). Active involvement of the child in the parental divorce may lead to an individuals' pursuit of a group of reference outside the family. Since this was the case only for males, it may indirectly show that divorcees' female offspring are more attached to the family and do not confide in friends despite the problems it creates in their lives. Orientation of females' possible selves to family is supported by the literature (Curry et al, 1994). Divorcees' offspring's (males and females) very close relationship with the stepparent is related to positive representations of selves regarding future friendships. This may be the outcome of the positive experience they have had with a person outside the biological family (Bolgar et al, 1995). Males who reported adultery in their parents' marriage reported negative possible selves towards friendships. This may be related to the social stigma attached to that (Giddens, 1993) or issues of trust, since family life seems to be destroyed by the presence of the person who separated the parental couple.

Females' positive representations of selves regarding future friendships were related to the relatively positive relationship they had with the custodial parent; keeping periodical contact with the non- custodial parent; having positive relationships with the stepparent; and not being made to visit unwillingly the non custodial parent (Table 29). These indicate the positive influence of a good relationship with 'significant others' involved in the divorce process (the family life), on the representations of selves reported by divorcees' female offspring. This may contribute to the development of positive schemata regarding relationships with people according to the nature of previous experiences in one's life. Such relationships possibly give grounds for feelings of acceptance and self-worth which contribute positively to future relationships.

The only circumstances of the divorce which were related to divorcees' female offspring preferences for social activities were concerned with a relatively positive relationship with the

custodial parent and where offspring were not obliged to visit the non-custodial parent (Table 29). Since those who reported a positive relationship with the custodial parent reported preferences for activities undertaken alone, it might be suggested that the offspring are overwhelmed or consumed by the family situation and the relationship with the custodial parent to such an extent that they avoid socialisation with persons outside the family environment. In addition, those who reported that parents' personality clashes were a cause of the divorce, who had lived through parental discord, and those who reported themselves obliged to visit their non-custodial parent although they did not wish to, reported preference for activities undertaken alone.

The above findings should be viewed with caution. The data reported is exploratory but may be used to guide the development of the questionnaire for the main study. The purpose of the main study is to extend the findings of the interview study to a large sample and to enable comparison of the effects of possible selves on individuals in the two cultures, UK and Greece where the rate of divorce and attitudes to it and the family are very different.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **MAIN STUDY - DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE (PILOT STUDY)**

The items of the questionnaires were derived directly from the responses given in the interviews. As far as possible the wording given in the interviews (particularly for the 'possible selves' questionnaire) responses was retained. The complete questionnaire is in Appendix C.

The questionnaires were devised and written in English. Since the study was comparative and a part of the field work was carried out in Greece (comparing the long-term effects of divorce as they were reported by Greek and English people), the questionnaires had to be translated into Greek. The main concern of the researcher was to give the "equivalent meaning" of the statement rather than giving a precise translation of the statements into the Greek language. To ensure appropriate translation initially the questionnaires were translated into Greek by the researcher. As a second step the Greek questionnaires were given to a Greek-English teacher who could speak and write the two languages fluently. She translated the Greek questionnaires into English and sent it back to the researcher. Finally, both the English teacher and the researcher worked on the two texts (English and Greek) comparing English and Greek statements. Disagreements on the translation of some statements were discussed extensively. The final decisions were taken jointly. A Greek psychologist, who had completed her studies in England and spoke English fluently, also contributed to the final decisions regarding the wording of statements. Finally, the Greek questionnaire was given to a teacher of the Greek language to check the accuracy of the Greek language used in the questionnaires from a linguistic perspective, to ensure that the statements were easily understood.

The aims of the pilot study were as follows:

- to check the wording of the questions in two ways:
  - a. to ensure that the questions could be easily understood
  - b. to improve the wording of the statements if they were unclear
- to increase or decrease the number of options in the multiple choice answers

- to test the clarity of the statements
- to test the need for giving operational definitions to 'key' notions like step-parents, custodial, residential parents and their opposites
- to check the clarity of the instructions
- to check the translation of the questionnaire.

### Sampling

Five young adults who had been interviewed in the initial stage of the study and fifteen other young people were used for the pilot study. The individuals who had been interviewed previously were chosen to facilitate checks on validity and reliability as the questionnaires were devised on the basis of the information offered by the interviewees. The group was used to ensure that the statements were relevant to individuals who had not taken part in the interviews. This group was also expected to suggest alternative questions or answers (for multiple choice), or supply information which would lead to new questions. The sample came from different socio-economic strata and different occupational environments. It was not considered necessary for an equal number of males and females to take part in the pilot study since the main aim was the improvement of the questionnaires. The sample consisted of 7 males and 13 females, English and Greek aged 25-35.

### Procedure

The pilot work was carried out at an individual level. A face-to face approach, was adopted. This provided an opportunity to explore and clarify misunderstandings and omissions. The researcher and the respondent read through the questionnaire together. The respondent was asked to complete the questionnaire on his/her own. The respondent was asked to feel free to report all words or sentences which were unclear to him/her. These were noted by the researcher. Issues emerging from this were discussed after the completion of the questionnaire. If the respondent preferred to talk about the statements as they were encountered the researcher followed his/her wish. There was no time limit on completion of the questionnaires. All the comments and suggestions made by participants were entered on the questionnaire, next to the relevant statement. At the end of the process the researcher asked the respondent whether s/he felt that the

questionnaire had enabled him/her to communicate all relevant information and whether s/he perceived the questions appropriate.

In the case of individuals who had previously been interviewed references to the information reported in the interviews were made by the researcher. This helped to clarify the meaning and to improve the wording of some statements.

### **Outcomes of the pilot-study**

**Alterations in the parental divorce questionnaire.**

1. Some of the statements which included the terms: step-mother/father, residential and custodial parent were not clear to the respondents since different individuals perceived the above terms in different ways according to their own experiences. For example there were individuals who asked the researcher to clarify whether a permanent partner of the mother could be called step-father or whether the title of step-father belonged exclusively to a new husband of his/her mother. These terms needed to be defined at the beginning of each section of the questionnaire. The following definitions were given:

**Step-parent:** the new partner of the mother or father, the prerequisite in this case being that they should be married.

**Custodial:** the parent who was living with the child. It was decided to use the term custodial instead of residential parent to make clear to participants that they were to answer the questions on the basis of the parent they perceived as the parent legally responsible for their up-bringing. This decision was made because of information that emerged from the interviews indicating cases where individuals moved from one parent to the other for long periods of time. The term non-custodial instead of non-residential was used to make clear that the question concerned the legal father. Cases where the parents were cohabitating did not fall within the scope of the present study.

2. In the question asking about the reasons for divorce, individuals gave a wide variety of answers which indicated that multiple-choice options were not appropriate. It seemed preferable to leave the question open to allow for free detailed responses.



This principle was also followed in relation to questions like: "reasons for not visiting the non-custodial parent", " what their parents asked them to do during the process of the divorce", "ways of involvement in their parents' divorce", "type of relationships with parents", "causes of quarrels". The wide variety of answers given by the participants to all the above questions indicated that a multiple-choice answer would not have been able to cover all eventualities.

3. Some questions did not apply to everybody. Consequently, it was decided to give individuals a general instruction at the beginning of the questionnaire about answering questions selectively according to whether they applied or not (e.g. the section about the stepparent could be left blank if a participant's custodial parent was not remarried). They could also report "Don't remember" next to statements about which they had no memories.

4. The pilot study indicated that there were some questions which most of the participants could not answer either because they could not remember or because the situation was so complicated that they did not understand what was going on at home at that time. Although it was apparent that these questions were not going to be answered by all individuals, it was decided to include them in the questionnaire since they gave useful information, when answered (e.g. "when did your relationships with your step-mother become worse?", "how long did that go on for?"). In these cases separate instructions were given to individuals about answering the questions selectively according to whether they applied to them or not. This instruction was used as a complementary one to the initial general instruction offered at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Minor changes were required in the possible selves questionnaire:

1. The general instructions given at the beginning of the questionnaire, referred to the future personal family life with the following phrasing: "your own family in the future". This way of phrasing proved to be misleading. There was difficulty in understanding whether the family life referred to their parents' family or their own personal family (either present or future). Consequently, the above phrase was replaced by one making clear that the focus of the study was participants' personal family life.

2. Double barrelled questions were included in the first version of the questionnaire to retain the essence of information derived from the interviews. This created difficulty because respondents were not clear about which part of the questions they were asked to agree or disagree with (e.g. "Since my parents had poor communication during their married life this is something I shall try to avoid in my own marriage"). The few statements expressed in a conditional form, or a causal form were replaced by a single statement which related only to the individual's behaviour in the future.

3. For the Greek sample, the legal status of divorce in Greece was discussed with Greek lawyers to identify differences in law regarding divorce between the two countries. Statements inappropriate to Greek participants might have had to be omitted in the Greek version of the questionnaires (e.g. in Greece, divorcees are not allowed to ask their children to testify in Court about parents' behaviour. However, this might be the case if divorcees' offsprings were adults). Since, these differences were not striking and the legal practices varied to a great extent from case to case it was decided that all the statements of the English version of the questionnaire should be retained in the Greek version. During the pilot study, none of the Greek participants reported inappropriate statements.

4. No problems were reported about understanding and answering questions where a double negative was used.

#### Overall contribution of the pilot study

The pilot study proved useful in refining the questionnaire. No questions were rejected but minor alteration were made.

The structure of the divorce questionnaire was maintained. The questions were classified under sections according to content, the questions themselves asked in chronological order. This structure was expected to facilitate recall. This was confirmed by the participants in the pilot study.

In the possible selves questionnaire, the majority of the conditional clauses were excluded or

rephrased and new ones substituted. Statements were expressed in a way that could be answered by individuals from divorced and intact families.

## **THE MAIN STUDY**

The quantitative part of the study aimed to identify the long-term effects of parental divorce on Greek and English individuals' representations of selves regarding their future life. As the two countries differ in the rate of divorce it was expected that this would affect social perceptions of divorce and hence the effects on individuals' self perceptions when they were involved in divorce. Noller and Callan (1991) report that in Great Britain between 30-45 per cent of couples married from the 1960s to the present day are likely to divorce. The rate of divorce has been dramatically increasing in Greece during the last twenty years (from 0.4 % in 1975 to 0.7% in 1980 onwards), but this is very small in comparison to the UK rate. The increase in divorced families started a decade earlier in the UK than in Greece (from 1.1 % in 1970 to 2.3% in 1975 and it is still increasing, 3.1% in 1994) (Eurostat, Demographic Statistics, 1996). Social perceptions of divorce therefore are likely to be different in the two countries and therefore there may be concomitant effects on individuals' possible selves.

### **Aims of the main study**

- to identify differences in possible selves between the Greek and English participants
- to explore whether individuals from divorced families report different possible selves from those from intact families in relation to family life, friendships, occupation and leisure. This is explored for Greek and English individuals,
- to explore differences in the possible selves reported by Greek and English divorcees' offspring
- to identify the effects of the demographic characteristics (gender, marital status, educational level, father's educational level) of divorcees' offspring on the possible selves reported by the Greek and UK samples
- to identify the effects of demographic characteristics (gender, marital status, educational level, father's educational level) reported by individuals from divorced and intact families in Greek and English individuals
- to identify relations between the circumstances of parental divorce experienced by divorcees'



offspring with the possible selves of individuals from divorced and intact families. This aim concerns both the Greek and English samples.

- to identify the circumstances of parental divorce which affect the possible selves which differentiate the Greek from English divorcees' offspring.

- to explore the relations between the possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding family life with the possible selves relating to friendships, occupational life and leisure.

### **Sampling problems**

Assembling an appropriate sample was difficult since:

- the study dealt with a personal and traumatic experience (divorce) (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980)
- because of issues of confidentiality the researcher was unable to gain access through any institution or organisation (e.g. courts, single-parent institution) which may have provided ways of contacting people who fitted the sampling requirements
- the study could not be incorporated into a large scale longitudinal survey which followed families for many years (e.g. NCDS) as ethical considerations meant that the questionnaires could not be distributed to individuals who took part in any of these studies.

Because of these difficulties a snowball sampling strategy was employed (Robson, 1993, p.142; Oppenheim, 1992, pp. 42-43). According to this sampling strategy, the researcher identified individuals that belonged in the population of interest (25-35 years). These individuals were used to identify other members of the population, who were themselves used as informants and so on. The identification of the first participants occurred either within a circle of colleagues and acquaintances or from volunteers who came into contact with the researcher. These volunteers emerged from advertising the study in student newspapers and on the notice-boards of various institutions.

This sampling strategy has limitations. However, conclusions can be drawn from such data (Smith, 1983). Another problem of the sampling was that more females than males initially came forward to fill in questionnaires. This gave a non equal number of male and female participants. This may have occurred because family issues tend to be perceived to be more related to "feminine" rather than masculine culture. An attempt was made to counter this trend by increasing

the number of the sample. Eventually, a satisfactory number (for the statistical analysis) of male and female individuals was assembled. Overall, 1200 questionnaires were sent out by the researcher.

### **Sample**

Three hundreds and thirty two individuals responded by filling out the questionnaire, 90 Greek and 80 English individuals from divorced families(these completed two questionnaires: the questionnaire about the divorce circumstances and the 'possible selves' questionnaire; 95 Greek and 67 English individuals from intact families. An unequal number of males and females made up the sample of the study, 64 Greek and 56 English females from divorced families; 62 Greek and 41 English females from intact families; 26 Greek and 22 English males from divorced families; 33 Greek and 25 English males from intact families. The participants were aged 25-35. Individuals from different socio-economic strata were included in the sample.

### **Procedure**

The questionnaires were mailed to the respondents. The researcher telephoned the prospective respondent in order to arrange the date for the dispatch of the questionnaires and to inform him/her about the study. The return date for the questionnaires was also arranged on the phone. Individuals were also requested to ensure that the questionnaires were completed in full. The questionnaires were sent with a covering letter signed by the researcher which:

- offered information about the aims of the study
- assured them of confidentiality and anonymity
- told them at which University the study was being undertaken
- thanked them for their help

A stamped addressed envelope for the return of the questionnaires was included in the envelope. The use of the enclosed envelope was explained in the covering letter. A few days before the return date the researcher contacted the participants to remind them to return the questionnaires and to thank them for their participation. Where it was possible the questionnaires were personally collected by the researcher to increase the return rate of the questionnaires.

**The questionnaire about the divorce circumstances.**

The majority of the questions which made up the divorce questionnaire were closed. This approach was selected to encourage adults, who would not have unlimited time, to complete the questionnaire. To facilitate accurate responses an option of 'other' was made available. Some open questions were included for more in depth information to be obtained. The questions were arranged in clusters as follows:

*Table 30: Sections of the questionnaire relating to parental divorce.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pre-divorce family situation</li></ul>
Post-divorce family life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reasons for divorce</li><li>- Information they were given about the divorce</li><li>- Child custodial parent relationship</li><li>- Child step-parent relationship</li><li>- Child non-custodial parent relationship</li><li>- Child's relationship with the partner of the non-custodial parent</li><li>- Child's involvement in parent's divorce</li><li>- Parent's volatile personal life</li><li>- Child's movement from one parent to another</li><li>- Support</li><li>- Parental relationship after divorce</li><li>- Own personal relationships</li></ul>

**Possible selves questionnaire**

The possible selves questionnaire included statements relating to information emerging from the interviews. The aspects of life studied concerned family, friendships, occupation/career, occupational relationships, leisure. The possible selves explored in the questionnaire were the ones identified by the qualitative analysis as the 'key' ones that differentiated individuals from intact families from those from divorced families.

The questions about possible selves concerned with family life included four statements, while the ones regarding friendships and occupation and occupational relationships consisted of three statements. The decision to have a different number of statements in each area was related to the amount of information provided in the interviews. Only four statements concerning possible



selves and leisure were employed in the questionnaire, since the interviews indicated that very few statements were sufficient to identify the representations of a social orientated self, an individual orientated self and representations of both selves in this domain. The participants were asked to respond to these statements on a rating scale starting from: strongly disagree= 1 to strongly agree= 6. No neutral option was employed. This was to avoid individuals' defensiveness in such personal matters by not giving them the opportunity to answer with a neutral answer.

The criteria for clustering the statements emerged from the interviews. The statements in a cluster related to a conceptual theme which was given in the operational definition of the categories devised by the researcher (see analysis of the interviews). The statements themselves were formed on the basis of the information that was provided by the interviewees. To check for social desirability, some of the statements were expressed in an impersonal/ indirect manner, e.g. "It is difficult for people..." instead of " It is difficult for me....". To ensure reliability similar future possible selves were expressed in different wordings (usually in a negative/opposite form), in order for intra-individual consistency to be established.

Some of the statements regarding family life were only phrased positively because:

- negative wording was not reported by any of the interviewees. This was the case for representations of selves regarding avoiding parental mistakes, focusing on communication with the partner/ spouse, having an ideal family life and being overprotective parents.
- negative wording would provide unreasonable statements e.g: " I want (I do not mind) to repeat my parents' mistakes...".
- the main idea was clearly and well expressed in positive statements, in affirmative form. There was no therefore reason to employ negative phrasing to express the same idea.

The decision about phrasing the statements in a positive or negative way was made on the basis of how clearly the possible self would be expressed. This depended on what phrasing would be more likely to express the future self reported by participants from divorced families; what the appropriate wording would be for best presenting the 'key' idea of the representation of self reported by interviewees.

Double negatives were avoided in the wording in the statements except when they had been adopted in the interviews. The researcher was aware of the difficulties of double negatives (Oppenheim, 1992, p.128). It was expected however, that this problem would be compensated for by the fact that the participants were adults, and should understand and be able to report appropriately. The majority of participants were also well-educated.

In the case of possible selves regarding friendships and occupation/ occupational relationships, the clusters consisted of either two negative and one positive statement or the opposite.

The number of positive and negative statements within each cluster was decided according to how dominant the positive or negative representations were in interviewees' discourse e.g. instability in occupational relationships was reported and described by the interviewees from divorced families in such detail that the statements in the questionnaires expressing this negative self, were believed to be closer to individuals' answers than the positive expression of self. In such a case two negative possible selves and one positive were employed by the researcher.

In the case of leisure all the statements were expressed in a positive way.

### **Grouping the questions relating to possible selves.**

The questions relating to possible selves employed in the study emerged from the analysis of the interviews. Since some questions shared common background content, it was necessary to group them for statistical analysis.

Factor analysis could have been adopted but was rejected because of the limited number of participants in relation to the number of questions. A further consideration was that the questionnaire was not intended to act as a psychometric test, or indeed have psychometric properties.

The decision about the grouping was based on evidence from the interviews and statistical correlations. Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficients (Appendix D) were computed for all the questions to identify those which shared common variance. The cut-off point for the correlation-coefficient

of a 'key' question (one highly correlated with many others) regarding possible selves about future career/occupational life and friendship with the others was 0.4 while the cutoff for inter-correlations between the questions falling in the same group was higher than 0.3 . The process of grouping was as follows:

- Significant correlation coefficients of more than 0.3 were identified
- Questions with correlation coefficients of more than 0.4 were identified. These questions were treated as 'key' ones around which a group was likely to develop
- In all cases groups of questions were related to the same aspect of life. No high correlations identified between questions from different aspects of life
- Labels were given to the groups according to the content of the questions which made them up.

This method of grouping created problems when questions were highly correlated with more than one 'key' question. These questions were attached to the 'key' one with which they were most highly correlated. Where the difference in the correlation coefficients between questions was marginal. The criterion adopted was the highest correlation coefficient, since a content criterion did not always presented itself as a useful one.

The categories that emerged from the variables regarding friendships were:

Category 1. Being undemanding in relationships with friends (que19, que82)

Category 2. Readily becoming involved in friendships (que91, que87, que97, que24)

Category 3. Being prepared to be committed to friendships (que17, que81, que25)

Category 4. Making close relationships with friends (que89, que21, que74, que76)

Category 5. Being permanently involved in friendships (que25, que27, que2)

The categories that emerged from the variables regarding occupational life were:

Category 1. Ambitious (que72, que99, que77, que79)

Category 2. Open to socialising with colleagues (que8 and que9)

Category 3. Focused on a particular occupation (que96 and que34)

Category 4. Stable-consistent relationships with colleagues (que36, que28, que29)

The criterion adopted for further grouping of the above categories was the content of the categories. For the possible selves concerning future friendships, the content criterion related to development of new friendships and the extent of involvement in friendships while for the



possible selves concerning the occupational life, the content criterion was based on relationships with colleagues and career orientation. Consequently, the above initial categories suggested the following combined categories regarding friendships: (a) individual's involvement in close friendships (categories 3, 4, 5) (b) being keen on developing friendships (categories 1, 2). Regarding future occupational life further grouping of variables suggested the following categories: (a) being career/occupation oriented (categories 1, 3) and (b) being keen on relationships/socialising with colleagues (group 2, 4).

Focusing on possible selves regarding friendships, an overall variable was created by adding up individuals' scores on each one of the five categories. This created a variable giving an indication of an individuals' overall positive representation of self about future friendships. This procedure was not employed in the case of possible selves regarding career/occupation since the groups of questions were conceptually independent.

In the process of grouping the questions relating to possible selves concerning individuals' future family life, the 0.4 correlation coefficient cut off point, revealed many 'key' questions.

Since the aim of grouping the questions was the reduction of the number of variables multi-correlated questions were placed together. The lowest correlation coefficient of the 'key central' question with the rest being 0.3. The correlation coefficients between the questions in each group were also estimated and taken into account. In some cases the inter-correlation coefficients between the questions in a group were low (but higher than .02). Where the correlation coefficient between a particular question and a 'key central' one was less than 0.3 the question remained in a different group, if it was highly correlated with another question.

The categories that emerged from the variables regarding relationships/family life were:

Category 1. Satisfied in relationships (que41, que20, que48, que93)

Category 2. Optimistic about relationships (que88, que58, que1, que7, que35, que70, que84, que38, que86, que73, que37, que42, que18, que4, que15, que33, que90)

Category 3. Confident about making relationships work (que32, que13, que30)

Category 4. Committed to family life / positive model of marriage (que52, que98, que26, que54, que51, que53, que55)

Category 5. Highly protective towards their children (que57, que60, que62, que75)

Category 6. Self avoiding parental mistakes in their own marital life (que64, que45, que39, que66)

Overall category: Being positive towards future personal relationships/ family life (positive self towards family)  
(categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,)

Each category of possible selves devised in this way was distinct. This enabled each to be explored separately. One overall variable summing the others giving an indication of a positive possible self with regard to future family life, was also calculated.

The findings from the study are reported in relation to cultural differences and the status of parental family (divorced-intact) in possible selves. The effects of demographic characteristics and the circumstances of parental divorce affecting the possible selves differentiating individuals from divorce and intact families and Greek from English divorcees' offspring are presented in the following three chapters of findings.

CHAPTER 9

THE EFFECTS OF NATIONALITY AND THE STATUS OF PARENTAL FAMILY ON POSSIBLE SELVES

Differences in possible selves reported by English and Greek individuals. The first question to address is whether there are differences in possible selves relating to future family, friendships, occupational life and leisure between Greek and English young adults. This data will enable consideration of the cultural effects on possible selves. These were explored by using analysis of variance comparing UK and Greek samples. All the grouping variables explored in the study were considered. The mean scores and the levels of significance given in Table 31 indicate that English participants were differentiated from the Greeks in the majority of the possible selves. This would suggest significant cultural differences between the two groups with regard to possible selves.

Table 31: Analysis of variance of mean scores of Greek and English individuals on possible selves.

Greek and English participants (N=261)	Greek individuals Means	S.D.	English individuals Means	S.D.	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Attached-committed to friendships	43.8	7.96	46.2	8.09	5.27	.022
Keen on friendships, not cautious	22.2	4.07	25.0	5.14	24.63	.000
Undemanding with friends	5.4	1.84	7.8	2.18	87.61	.000
Prepared to be committed to friends	12.4	3.21	13.9	3.00	14.57	.000
Career oriented	21.7	4.68	19.9	5.52	7.56	.006
Keen on further relationships with colleagues	19.3	3.76	21.2	3.95	15.58	.000
Open to socialising with colleagues	9.2	2.17	9.9	1.85	7.38	.007
Focused on a particular occupation	6.3	2.40	4.9	2.12	21.73	.000
Stable/consistent in relationships with colleagues	10.1	2.83	11.3	2.84	11.57	.001
Confident about making relationships work	13.5	2.69	12.2	2.77	13.73	.000
Committed/ positive model of married	34.3	4.49	30.4	5.11	45.54	.000
Self avoiding parental mistakes	18.4	3.08	16.7	3.25	19.15	.000
Positive perception of self about friendships	66.0	9.86	71.2	11.87	14.13	.000
Positive perception of self regarding future family life	171.2	20.14	162.7	22.39	10.26	.002

The two nationality groups differ in the scores they reported on representations of selves regarding future friendships, relationships with colleagues, occupation and family life (see Table 31). No differences were found in their scores on leisure activities.



The analysis of variance indicated that English individuals were less oriented to family life, compared to their Greek counterparts. They were less confident about making relationships work, had a less positive model of marriage and a less positive representation of self regarding avoiding parental mistakes. These findings are likely to be related to the more family-centred Greek culture in comparison to that in UK. Previous research highlighting the more individualistic way of living in the developed Western European countries as opposed to the Mediterranean ones (Mousourou, 1985) may explain the present findings. English individuals' lower scores on possible selves relating to future family life may indicate increasing detachment from family life which is no longer the key social institution providing social and economic stability for its members (Goode, 1982; Harris, 1983; Kataki, 1984; Haritos-Fatouros and Hatzigeleki, 1997; Giddens, 1993). Nissel (1982) reports that the restricted role of the family in UK individuals' lives makes children quick to sense that the family is no longer the powerful provider, educator and refuge it once was and, though temporarily they depend on it, soon they will be able to shake it off. The higher scores on possible selves from Greek individuals relating to family is supported by Doumani (1989) and Mousourou (1985) who stress the introverted nature of the Greek family where its members are consumed within an environment in which they share both happy and unhappy life events. Tsoukalas (1986) and Kongidou (1995) suggest that although the family does not continue to play the crucial role in an individual's life, as an economic unit it still provides a source of support given the insufficient Greek welfare state. Consequently, Greek society still keeps alive the role of 'own' people which means that family rather than friends is the group of reference. In West European societies the individuals' detachment from the family is greater as the state provides a higher level of economic support.

The evidence from the questionnaires also indicates that Greek individuals score higher on possible selves in relation to occupation (Table 31). They demonstrated a greater focus on a particular occupation than the English sample, seeming to have a clear occupational goal. Despite this they do not see work as a place where they develop close relationships. They were less keen on and open to socialising with colleagues and perceived themselves as less involved in stable/consistent relationships at work than their English counterparts.

It seems that English individuals are more positive than their Greek counterparts regarding being committed to friendships, keen on developing friendships, being undemanding with friends and being prepared to be committed to future friendships (see Table 31). This supports Doumani's suggestion that western European people's orientation to friends instead of family reflects the individualistic way of living dominating these societies. The dissolution of friendships does not imply serious consequences because this is only related to social life (Doumani, 1989). English individuals' orientation to people outside the family is also indicated in the higher scores they reported relating to being keen on developing relationships with colleagues, being open to socialising with colleagues and being involved in stable-consistent relationships with colleagues, as compared to those reported by their Greek counterparts (Table 31). Individuals' involvement in their occupation as a place for "emotional" satisfaction can also be understood within the framework of an individualistic way of living. Recent research has emphasized the role of occupation in one's life as a place for self-actualisation (Van de Kaa, 1987; Burns, 1995).

Overall, the possible selves of the Greek participants are more oriented to family and career (Table 31) while the English individuals are more oriented to relationships with people outside the family, either friends or colleagues at work. Greeks seem to have kept the family as the main point of reference in their lives alongside their career, while English individuals are more oriented to relationships outside the family.

Why might these differences have arisen? English individuals' detachment from the family and orientation to friendships and relationships with colleagues may be related to the high rate of divorce in the UK and individuals' perceptions of the limited role of the family in their lives and its inability to meet their own needs in the long-term. This is not the case in Greek society where the rate of divorce is still low (Eurostats, 1995). The majority of Greek individuals' experiences regarding family life are usually positive.

Greek individuals were both career and family oriented. The family rather than colleagues provides a reference and support group. The occupational environment although perhaps significant as a source of personal satisfaction and self-actualization does not seem to substitute for the family environment which is of particular importance in their lives. Perhaps, the social

representations of the family, and individuals' vicarious experiences which provide positive models of relationships and marriage (Bandura, 1982; Showers and Cantor, 1985) keep Greek participants oriented towards family (as a network of relationships) although they are also oriented to their occupation. This supports studies showing that Greek individuals maintain strong intergenerational links (Haritos-Fatouros and Hatzigeleki, 1997), value family a great deal although elements of both male and female identity demand that they are also involved in career (Bjornberg, 1995; Burns, 1995). Although Greek participants are oriented and focused on a particular occupation, they are not involved in close relationships with colleagues.

Having considered the differences in possible selves between Greek and English young adults the analysis now turns to explore differences between the offspring of divorced and intact families.

#### **Possible selves discriminating individuals from divorced and intact families (Greek and English population is mixed).**

Let us now examine differences in possible selves with regard to future family, friendships, occupation/occupational relationships and leisure, in individuals from divorced and intact families. Analysis of these differences was undertaken using analysis of variance. Pooling the data from Greek and English individuals, comparison of the possible selves from individuals from divorced and intact families revealed relatively few differences. The main category where differences arose was in relation to friendships. Table 32 indicates that individuals from divorced families are more positive towards friends, more keen on developing new friendships and more undemanding with friends than their counterparts from intact families. Perhaps friendships substitute for deteriorated family relationships. McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) have reported that parental absence and conflicts between parents where there was divorce combined with reduced parental ties affected parent-child relationships and increased the extent to which offspring relied more on peers for comfort and direction (Demo and Acock, 1988).



*Table 32: Multivariate analysis of variance of mean scores of individuals from divorced and intact families.*

Participants from divorced and intact families (overall) (N=261)	Participants from intact families Means	S.D.	Participants from divorced families Means	S.D.	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Keen on friendships, not cautious	22.3	4.85	24.0	4.64	8.89	.003
Undemanding with friends	5.7	2.34	6.8	2.33	13.86	.000
Self avoiding parental mistakes	18.2	3.49	17.4	3.08	4.03	.046
Positive perception of self about friendships	66.3	11.17	69.2	11.85	4.19	.042

Table 32 also indicates that individuals from intact families scored higher on possible selves attempting to avoid parental mistakes in their marital life than their counterparts from divorced families. One might have expected the opposite pattern of scores to be the case. This contributes to our understanding of previous studies demonstrating the high rate of divorce in individuals who have experienced parental divorce and marital instability (Pope and Mueller, 1976; Wallerstein, 1991; Gleen and Kramer, 1987). Divorcees’ offspring do not seem to possess a strong positive representation of a self striving to avoid parental mistakes. Attempting to avoid parental mistakes may promote successful marital life by enabling the individual to perceive relevant environmental cues and work towards a goal. Perhaps, this weak positive possible self is related to a perception of divorce as a more viable option to terminate a dysfunctional marriage. This may be an indication of a disinhibitory effect of parental modelling on children’s attitudes towards divorce (Greenberg and Nay, 1982). The information emerging from the interviews indicates that only divorcees’ offspring reported a possible self regarding avoiding parental mistakes. For non-divorced offspring it did not emerge. When confronted with having to respond in the questionnaire offspring from intact families had a more positive possible self.

What is interesting in this analysis is that the differences in possible selves between young adults from divorced and intact families are considerably fewer than between Greek and English young adults overall. Given the similarity of the sample in terms of educational level these differences are marked. The next section will explore this issue further by comparing the differences between Greek and English divorcees’ offspring.

**Possible selves differentiating English from Greek divorcees’ offspring.**

An examination of the differences between Greek and English divorcees’ offspring will facilitate a greater understanding of the relative influences of culture and divorce on the young adult’s developing view of him/herself in the future. Analysis of variance (Table 33) indicates that Greek and English individuals from divorced families differed in possible selves relating to almost all aspects of life explored, family, friendships and career. The only exception was leisure.

The possible selves identified in the previous section as being affected by parental divorce seem to be considerably fewer than those affected by individuals’ nationality. Table 33 indicates that relationships outside the family environment (friends and colleagues) seem to be more important for English than Greek divorcees’ offspring while Greek individuals scored higher than their English counterparts on the possible selves relating to family life.

*Table 33: Multivariate analysis of variance of mean scores of Greek and English individuals from divorced families. (The variables in bold represent the differences in the possible selves concerning only by divorcees’ offspring).*

Greek and English participants from divorced families (N=165)	Greek divorcees' offspring Means	S.D	English divorcees' offspring Means	S.D.	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Keen on friendships, not cautious	22.87	3.90	25.46	5.08	13.71	.000
Undemanding with friends	5.81	2.02	8.12	2.08	52.92	.000
<b>Prepared to be committed to friends</b>	<b>12.70</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>14.12</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>8.23</b>	<b>.005</b>
<b>Keen on further relationships with colleagues</b>	<b>19.37</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>21.90</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>17.38</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Open to socialising with colleagues</b>	<b>9.05</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>10.32</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>16.22</b>	<b>.000</b>
Focused on a particular occupation	6.51	5.29	4.98	2.36	15.50	.000
Stable/consistent in relationships with colleagues	10.32	2.98	11.58	3.00	7.38	.007
Committed/ positive model of married	34.30	5.05	30.34	5.42	23.33	.000
Self avoiding parental mistakes	18.11	2.96	16.66	3.06	9.44	.002
<b>Positive perception of self about friendships</b>	<b>67.02</b>	<b>10.04</b>	<b>72.02</b>	<b>13.48</b>	<b>8.15</b>	<b>.005</b>
Positive perception of self in future family life	169.97	21.30	162.88	24.42	3.97	.048

Table 34 shows analysis of variance of possible selves of Greek and English individuals from intact families. These reveal a very similar pattern to the differences between the offspring of divorced Greek and English families. This reinforces that possible selves are more dependent on

the cultural background of the participants than their status as the offspring of divorced or intact families.

*Table 34: Multivariate analysis of variance of mean scores of Greek and English individuals from intact families.*

Greek and English participants from intact families (N=96)	Greek participants from intact families Means	S.D	English participants from intact families Means	S. D.	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Keen on friendships, not cautious	21.41	4.15	23.80	5.23	7.09	.009
Undemanding with friends	5.00	1.60	7.05	2.37	24.69	.000
Career oriented	21.95	4.00	18.66	5.36	12.13	.001
Ambitious	15.73	3.35	13.77	4.74	5.90	.017
Focused on a particular occupation	6.21	2.18	4.88	1.82	8.32	.005
Confident about making relationships work	13.71	2.71	11.91	2.75	11.44	.001
Committed/ positive model of married	34.43	4.20	31.05	4.89	14.94	.000
Self avoiding parental mistakes	19.00	3.23	17.11	3.65	6.91	.010
Positive perception o self in future family life	172.60	18.11	163.83	18.40	5.20	.025

The next section explores these differences further considering only the Greek sample.

**Factors discriminating Greek individuals from divorced families from their counterparts from intact families.**

A main aim of the study was the identification of differences in possible selves regarding future family, friendships, occupational life and leisure reported by individuals from divorced and intact families in each nationality sample (Greek, English). An analysis of variance was employed to identify the possible selves which differentiate Greek individuals from divorced and intact families. The analysis revealed that possible selves regarding future family and occupational life and leisure do not discriminate Greek individuals from divorced families from those from intact families. The possible selves which differentiated participants from divorced and intact families were very few and related only to friendships.



*Table 35: Multivariate analysis of variance of mean scores of Greek individuals from divorced families and their counterparts from intact families (only the significant differences between the variables are presented).*

Greek participants from intact and divorced families (N=150)	Participants from intact families Means	S.D.	Participants from divorced families Means	S.D.	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Keen on friendships, not cautious	21.4	4.15	22.8	3.90	5.06	.026
Undemanding with friends	5.0	1.60	5.8	2.02	6.82	.010

Table 35 indicates that participants from divorced families were more undemanding regarding making new friendships, and more keen on developing friendships, than their counterparts from intact families. This may indicate a need to develop relationships that substitute for the insecure relationships they may have experienced with their parents and the loss of one parent. Significant others outside the family environment on which to rely and invest may substitute for parental figures because of the decrease of parental ties and parental absence (Demo and Acock, 1988; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Cockett and Tripp, 1994).

The findings indicate a limited influence of parental divorce on Greek individuals' representations of selves regarding the aspects of life explored in the study. This may be partially interpreted in terms of the strong network of support provided to Greek divorcees' offspring by the extended family, relatives and friends (Doumani, 1989; Kongidou, 1996). Also, the low rate of divorce in Greece possibly contributes to positive representations of selves regarding family life and marital happiness regardless of one's personal experiences. Positive vicarious experiences from the extended family (Bandura, 1982) may benefit divorcees' offspring representations of selves about their future family and occupational life in terms of experiencing relationships which provide an introduction to hierarchical occupational environments (Parsons and Bales, 1955; Nock, 1988).

Given these relatively small differences in the possible selves of offspring from intact and divorced Greek families the next question is to establish whether there are greater differences in the possible selves in the English sample where divorce is more commonplace.

**Possible selves discriminating English individuals from divorced families from their counterparts from intact families.**

In the English sample, the majority of possible selves that differentiate individuals from divorced families from those from intact families are related to future occupational life (see Table 36). Only one possible self concerning future friendships differentiated the English participants from the two groups. No possible selves regarding future family and leisure differentiated individuals from divorced and intact families.

*Table 36: Multivariate analysis of variance of mean scores of English individuals from divorced and intact families on possible selves.*

English participants from intact and divorced families (N=111)	Participants from intact families Means	S.D.	Participants from divorced families Means	S.D.	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Undemanding with friends	7.0	2.37	8.1	2.08	5.77	.018
Keen on further relationships with colleagues	19.8	4.00	21.9	3.92	6.93	.010
Ambitious	13.7	4.74	15.5	4.12	3.98	.048
Open to socialising with colleagues	9.2	1.86	10.3	1.79	7.87	.006

Table 36 shows differences in possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding being ambitious. Individuals from divorced families tend to have more ambitious representations of themselves than their counterparts from intact families. Career life may be a substitute for family life. Also, English divorcees' offspring were more open to and keen on developing relationships with colleagues. These findings tend to support the recent literature describing the individualistic way of living in European countries, especially the UK (Giddens, 1993; Van de Kaa, 1987) and the role of occupation as a central domain in individuals' lives. The occupational environment may become a second home since it is a place where they develop close relationships with colleagues (Corbett, 1997). Although English divorcees' offspring's orientation to occupation possibly indicates the high value they set on occupation, it may not predict a high level of success. This study does not explore this issue but there is research which suggests that divorcees' offspring possess jobs with lower earnings and lower prestige than individuals from intact families (Nock, 1988).

Divorcees' offspring's possible selves regarding being more open and keen on socialising with colleagues than their counterparts from intact families, could be understood in connection with the possible self regarding friendships. Divorcees' offspring reported being more undemanding with friends than their counterparts from intact families. Overall, English participants from divorced families reported themselves more keen on relationships outside the family environment than those from intact families. Perhaps friends and colleagues substitute for family relationships (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Demo and Acock, 1988).

**Effects of the status of parental family (divorced-intact) in conjunction with individuals' nationality.**

Exploration of the interaction effects between individual's status as the offspring of divorced and intact families and their nationality will contribute to the previous analysis relating to differences between individuals of divorced and intact families for Greek and UK participants separately.

*Table 37: Interaction effects of the analysis of variance and mean scores according to the status of parental family by individuals' nationality on possible selves regarding future occupation and relationships with friends.*

Greek and English participants X status of parental family (divorced- intact) (N=325)	Greek from intact families	Greek from divorced families	English from intact families	English from divorced families	F d.f. (1)	Sign. of F
Ambitious	15.30	15.13	13.92	15.41	4.59	.033
Keen on friendships, not cautious	19.60	19.32	21.07	21.89	4.92	.027
Readily becoming involved in friendships	9.46	9.08	9.65	10.25	6.33	.012

The significant interaction effects indicating a difference between Greek and English participants from divorced and intact families concern ambition in career and relationships with friends. Table 37 shows that UK individuals from both divorced and intact families scored higher on possible selves relating to friendships than their Greek counterparts. This indicates nationality rather than divorce as a mediating factor for relationships with friends, where UK individuals are more oriented to aspects of life and relationships with people beyond the family. In relation to ambition, the highest scoring group was the UK sample from divorced families. The Greek sample had similar scores but the UK sample from intact families had the lowest score. In the Greek sample, intact families seem to be beneficial for participants concerning ambition and relationships with friends although the differences are small while UK divorcees' offspring seem



to be more ambitious and oriented to relationships with friends than their counterparts from intact families. These possible selves may substitute for the less positive possible selves concerning family life reported by UK individuals compared to that reported by their Greek counterparts (see Table 31).

Summary: Overall, English individuals from divorced and intact families were differentiated on more aspects of life than was the case for their Greek counterparts, although the differences were small. Since divorce is more commonplace and long-standing in the UK it may affect more aspects of offspring's lives than where it is a relatively recent phenomenon (in Greece).

The findings also indicate the primacy of cultural differences. The two nationalities differ in the possible selves relating to almost all the aspects of life explored in the study. Divorcees' offspring and those from intact families also differed in some possible selves (Table 33), but the differences are considerably fewer when it comes to possible selves affected only by parental divorce. It is cultural differences rather than parental divorce which seems to play the major role in the possible selves which have developed. English individuals are mainly oriented to relationships with people outside the family, friends and colleagues. In the offspring of divorcees these differences are more marked with career playing a more important role. Greek individuals report themselves more oriented to family life. However, Greek divorcees' offspring were more oriented to friends than their counterparts from intact families. Individuals from both nationalities seem to be more oriented to people outside the family when they experience parental divorce. Occupation and friendships may be perceived as substitutes for family life by English and Greek divorcees' offspring respectively. This may also indicate a cultural difference regarding the point of reference in each society when one experiences parental divorce. Friends seem to constitute the main reference group and source of support in a family centred society (Greek) where divorce and consequently instability of close relationships between people, is a quite recent social situation. Since the rate of divorce is low in Greece, despite personal experience of parental divorce, vicarious experiences may contribute to a positive representation of self regarding future family and relationships (Bandura, 1982). In contrast, in the UK, given the individualistic, highly urbanised and industrialised English society, the occupational environment may have become the key place for developing a social life. This supports the interactionism tradition, which assumes that persons seek out situations that allow the operation

of certain identities (Stryker, 1987, p.85) i.e. for divorcees' offspring; friendships and work seem to be the 'appropriate' environments for Greek and English divorcees' offspring respectively. The appropriateness of the environment depends on the divorcees' offspring's assessment of the social representations of the divorce and the attitudes of people towards divorce.

The emphasis on different reference groups for Greek and English divorcees' offspring, friendships and occupational environment respectively, may be related to the most popular representations of selves in each society/culture. Since Greek society is family-oriented and sets high value on 'our' people, friends may substitute for the family life while occupation may have less perceived value in a society relatively recently industrialised and urbanised. These suggestions regarding the role of society in shaping individuals' behaviour and selves derive from the interactionism tradition that 'the social person is shaped by interaction and social structure determines the possibility for action' (Wiley and Alexander, 1987, p.85; Honess and Yardley, 1987).

### **Correlations between possible selves**

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between all the possible selves which evolved during the study in order to explore links between them. As a first step, the focus will be on the correlations between the possible selves (see previous section of findings) which differentiate individuals from divorced and intact families, and the other possible selves explored in the study. Correlations between all the possible selves explored in the study will be calculated to shed light on the intergenerational transmission of parental divorce in terms of the extent of divorcees' offspring's orientation to other aspects of life, apart from family (Pope and Mueller, 1976; Mueller and Pope, 1977; Greenberg and Nay, 1982). This will be applied to both the Greek and English samples.

### **The Greek sample**

The possible selves which differentiate Greek individuals from divorced and intact families concern (a) being undemanding with friends and (b) being keen on developing friendships. The Pearson correlation coefficients between these possible selves and the possible selves regarding

the individuals’ future family life, occupational life and leisure were calculated.

Correlations were also calculated for individuals from intact families to identify those which only related to divorcees’ offspring.

*Table 38: Significant correlations between the possible self regarding being undemanding with friends and family life and relationships with colleagues at work. The numbers in bold present the correlations concerning only divorcees’ offspring.*

	Committed to family/ positive model of marriage	Highly protective towards their children	Positive perception of self towards own family	Having stable/consistent relationships with colleagues
<b>Divorced families</b> Undemanding in relationships with friends	<b>-. 3114</b> <b>p = .003</b>	<b>-. 2798</b> <b>p = .008</b>	<b>-. 2946</b> <b>p = .005</b>	<b>. 2897</b> <b>p = . 006</b>
<b>Intact families</b> Undemanding in relationships with friends	<b>-. 1393</b> <b>p = NS</b>	<b>-. 0627</b> <b>p = NS</b>	<b>.0387</b> <b>p = NS</b>	<b>.1293</b> <b>p = NS</b>

Table 38 indicates that there is a significant negative correlation of individuals’ possible selves regarding being undemanding with people and (a)committed to family life/having positive model of marriage (-.31, p= .003), (b) being highly protective of children (-.27, p= .008) and (c ) being positive towards future family life (-.29, p= .005). This suggests that divorcees’ offspring’s lesser involvement and commitment to family life is related to their perception of self regarding making friendships without setting conditions and not being highly critical of people. The need of divorcees’ offspring for opportunities for socialisation with people outside the family is supported by Table 38 which indicates a positive correlation between the possible selves relating to being undemanding with friends and being keen on developing stable, permanent relationships with colleagues. Friends and colleagues seem to substitute for family life.

Being undemanding with friends is possibly a counterbalancing self to a low representation of self regarding future family life. This suggestion is supported: (a) by the negative correlation of the possible selves reported by divorcees’ offspring regarding being confident of making relationships work, committed to/having a positive model of marriage with being prepared to be committed to friends (-.28, p=.006; -.28, p=.006) (b) by the negative correlation of the possible selves reported by divorcees’ offspring regarding being confident of making relationships work with being attached to friends (-.21, p=.038) and (c ) by the negative correlation of the possible



selves about being committed to family/having a positive model of marriage, being highly protective towards children, with being involved in stable, consistent relationships with colleagues ( $-.26, p=.012$ ;  $-.39, p=.000$ ) and (d) by the negative correlation of the possible selves about being highly protective towards children with being keen on developing further relationships with colleagues ( $-.35, p=.001$ ) (Table 39). The complementary role of friendships to family desires and individuals' orientation to friends instead of any other network of relationships is possibly developed through individuals' talking about parent's divorce with friends and by the support they have received from friends. This is indicated in responses to open-ended questions where the majority of Greek divorcees' offspring reported friends as the main source of support with whom they had discussed their parent's divorce. Overall, Table 39 indicates that divorcees' offspring's deep involvement with people outside the family environment, in terms of being committed, attached and close to either friends or colleagues, appears to be negatively related to deep involvement in family life.

The positive possible self regarding being readily involved in friendships is positively correlated with the representation of self as committed/ possessing a positive model of self as married ( $.24, p=.019$ ) and being positive towards family ( $.29, p=.004$ ). Perhaps, divorcees' offspring's perception of self as committed and being positive towards personal relationship/family life is related with positive components of their self-concept which may make them easily involved in new relationships with people, friendships. Similar suggestions can be made for the positive correlation between the possible selves concerning orientation to social leisure activities with the possible self related to being committed/possessing a positive model of marriage ( $.20, p=.050$ ).

Furthermore, Table 39 indicates that a positive image of self regarding being satisfied and optimistic regarding relationships is positively correlated with the possible selves regarding developing relationships with friends and colleagues. Perhaps, this indicates consistency of positive cognitive schemata about close relationships with people either in terms of family or friendships. Table 39 indicates that the more divorcees' offspring are oriented towards family life in terms of being committed/possessing a positive model of self as married and highly protective towards children, the more career oriented and ambitious they are.

Table 39: Greek sample: Correlations between the possible selves concerning future family life with possible selves about future friendships, occupational life and leisure. The numbers in bold present the correlations concerning only divorcees' offspring.

GREEK SAMPLE (Divorced families: N=90 Intact families: N=94	Family, satisfied with relationships	Family, optimistic about relationships	Family, confident about making relationships work	Family, committed/posit ive model of married	Family, highly protective towards their children	Family, avoiding parental mistakes	Family, .positive overall perception of self regarding their future family.
Friends/ becomes readily involved in friendships	<b>.2584/ p = .014</b> .0414/ p = NS	<b>.2845/ p = .007</b> <b>.2330/ p = .026</b>	<b>.1025/ p = NS</b> <b>.2625/ p =.011</b>	<b>.2468/ p = .019</b> <b>.1803/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0247/ p = NS</b> <b>.0408/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0846/ p = NS</b> <b>.2231/ p = NS</b>	<b>.2990/ p = .004</b> <b>.2146/ p = NS</b>
Friends/ prepared to be committed to friends	<b>.2949/ p = .005</b> <b>.1813/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0757/ p = NS</b> <b>.2594/ p = .013</b>	<b>-.2674/p = 011</b> <b>.1320/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.2891/p =.006</b> <b>-.0726/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.2930/p = .005</b> <b>-.2790/ p =.007</b>	<b>-.0705/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1151/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0699/ p = NS</b> <b>.1752/ p = NS</b>
Friends/ wants to make close relationships with friends	<b>.1531/ p = NS</b> <b>.0074/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0156/ p = NS</b> <b>.1027/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1581/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0075/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0209/ p = NS</b> <b>.0830/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0176/ p =NS</b> <b>.0778/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1007/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1137/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0151/ p = NS</b> <b>.0714/ p = NS</b>
Friends/ permanently involved in friendships	<b>.4170/ p = .000</b> <b>.0801/ p = NS</b>	<b>.2119/ p = .045</b> <b>.1186/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1485/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0876/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1879/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1318/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1982/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1720/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0380/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1939/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0934/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0078/ p = NS</b>
Friends/ attached to friends	<b>.3311/ p = .001</b> <b>.1081/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1051/ p = NS</b> <b>.1902/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.2192/p =.038</b> <b>.0162/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1925/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0532/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1838/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1569/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0052/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1589/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0141/ p = NS</b> <b>.0909/ p = NS</b>
Friends, positive perception of self towards future friendships	<b>.3540/ p = .001</b> <b>.1081/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1490/ p = NS</b> <b>.2374/ p = 0.23</b>	<b>-.1881/ p = NS</b> <b>.1043/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1480/ p = NS</b> <b>.0009/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.2048/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1190/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0509/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1004/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0470/ p = NS</b> <b>.1477/ p = NS</b>
Career, career oriented	<b>-.0020/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0613/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0465/ p = NS</b> <b>.0164/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1394/ p = NS</b> <b>.0777/ p = NS</b>	<b>.2286/ p = .030</b> <b>.1924/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0497/ p =NS</b> <b>.0217/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1405/ p = NS</b> <b>.3708/ p =.003</b>	<b>.1268/ p = NS</b> <b>.0369/ p = NS</b>
Career/ ambitious	<b>.0068/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1756/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0414/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0341/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1739/ p = NS</b> <b>.0689/ p = NS</b>	<b>.2299/ p =.029</b> <b>.0931/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0841/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0335/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1521/ p = NS</b> <b>.3993/ p =.001</b>	<b>.1045/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0889/ p = NS</b>
Career/ open to socialising with colleagues	<b>.2368/ p = .025</b> <b>.2446/ p = .018</b>	<b>.797/ p = NS</b> <b>.4081/ p = .000</b>	<b>.1521/ p = NS</b> <b>.1130/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0259/ p = NS</b> <b>.1994/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0905/ p = NS</b> <b>-.1360/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0426/ p = NS</b> <b>.0314/ p = NS</b>	<b>.8260/ p = NS</b> <b>.3199/ p = .013</b>
Career/ focused on a particular occupation	<b>-.0144/ p = NS</b> <b>.1578/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0322/ p = NS</b> <b>.0830/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0200/ p = NS</b> <b>.0364/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1171/ p = NS</b> <b>.2106/ p = NS</b>	<b>.2306/ p =.029</b> <b>.0913/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0556/ p = NS</b> <b>.0559/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1002/ p = NS</b> <b>.1858/ p = NS</b>
Career/ involved in stable, consistent relationships with colleagues	<b>.1358/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0190/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1126/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0310/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1192/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0429/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.2624/ p =.012</b> <b>-.1653/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.3929/ p =.000</b> <b>.0913/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1773/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0920/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0918/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0659/ p = NS</b>
Career/ keen on developing further relationships with colleagues	<b>.2360/ p = .025</b> <b>.1317/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1304/ p = NS</b> <b>.2195/ p = .037</b>	<b>-.0512/ p = NS</b> <b>.0384/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1855/p = NS</b> <b>-.0014/p = NS</b>	<b>-.3501/p =.001</b> <b>-.1810/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.1589/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0410/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0238/ p = NS</b> <b>.1574/ p = NS</b>
Leisure, socially oriented in leisure activities	<b>.0442/ p = NS</b> <b>.0486/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1938/ p = NS</b> <b>.0459/ p = NS</b>	<b>-.0770/ p = NS</b> <b>.0852/ p = NS</b>	<b>.2076/ p = .050</b> <b>-.0173/ p = NS</b>	<b>.0322/ p = NS</b> <b>-.2341/ p =.023</b>	<b>.1157/ p = NS</b> <b>-.0020/ p = NS</b>	<b>.1795/ p = NS</b> <b>.0286/ p = NS</b>

The first row of numbers in the cells concern individuals from divorced families and the second one those from intact families.

**The English sample**

The only significant correlations of the possible selves (see Table 40) differentiating individuals from divorced and intact families with the rest of the possible selves explored in the study, which related only to divorcees' offspring are the positive correlations between being undemanding with friends and (a) positive towards personal relationships/future family life and (b) socially oriented in leisure activities. The more undemanding divorcees' offspring are with people, the more positive they are towards their future family life and the more socially oriented regarding leisure activities. The rest of the possible selves which differentiated (according to Manova statistical test) individuals from divorced and intact families: being open to further socialising with colleagues, being keen on developing further relationships with colleagues, and being ambitious were not significantly correlated with the rest of the possible selves explored in the study. Table 40 indicates that there seems to be consistency in the nature of the possible selves reported by English divorcees' offspring about being undemanding with people and being positive regarding their future family life. However, the findings and the suggestions presented in this section should be treated with caution since all the correlations were very low.

*Table 40: The only significant correlations between the possible selves which differentiated individuals from divorced and intact families (concerning the representation of self about being undemanding with people). The numbers in bold present the correlations concerning only divorcees' offspring.*

	Family, positive towards future family life	Leisure, socially oriented in leisure activities
<b>Divorced families</b> Friends, being undemanding with friends	<b>.3036</b> <b>p = .008</b>	<b>.3209</b> <b>p = .005</b>
<b>Intact families</b> Friends, being undemanding with friends	<b>-.1216</b> <b>p = NS</b>	<b>.1450</b> <b>p = NS</b>

The positive correlations, depicted in Table 41, of the possible selves about future family life with representations of selves about friendships and leisure, indicate that there is consistency in the nature of representations of selves about being committed/ possessing a positive model of self as married, being confident and positive towards personal relationships/future family life with the representations of selves about being prepared to be committed to friendships.



Table 41: Correlations of possible selves regarding future family with possible selves regarding future friendships and occupational life reported by English individuals from divorced families. The numbers in bold present the correlations concerning only divorcees' offspring.

ENGLISH SAMPLE (Divorced families: N=76 Intact families: N= 64	Family, satisfied in the future family	Family, optimistic about relationships	Family, confident about making relationships work	Family, committed to their future family life/positive model of married	Family, highly protective towards children	Family, avoiding parental mistakes	Family, .positive overall perception of self regarding their future family.
Friends, keen on friendships	.2989/ p = .009 .3862/ p =.001	.3987/ p = .000 .2505/ p = .046	.2177/ p = NS .2695/ p =.030	.3051/ p = .007 .0524/ p = NS	.0817/ p = NS .0322/ p = NS	-.0681/ p = NS -.5144/ p =.001	.3921/ p = .001 -.0094/ p = NS
Friends, readily involved in friendships	.2816/ p = .014 .3276/ p = .008	.3211/ p =.005 .2919/ p = .019	.2392/ p = .037 .1969/ p = NS	.3258/ p = .004 .1262/ p = NS	.1135/ p = NS .0765/ p = NS	.0394/ p = NS -.4182/ p =.011	.3633/ p = .001 .0766/ p = NS
Friends, prepared to be committed to friendships	.5251/ p = .000 .4343/ p = .000	.6950/ p = .000 .6037/ p = .000	.3138/ p = .006 .1771/ p = NS	.4997/ p = .000 .2035/ p = NS	-.0433/ p = NS .0212/ p = NS	-.0366/ p = NS -.4332/ p =.008	.6426/ p = .000 .2872/ p = NS
Friends, close relationships with friends	.2786/ p = .015 .3847/ p =.002	.3079/ p = .007 .2239/ p = NS	.2333/ p = .043 .2976/ p = .017	.3762/ p = .001 .1494/ p = NS	.0122/ p = NS .1362/ p = NS	.0192/ p = NS -.1775/ p = NS	.3504/ p = .002 .1831/ p = NS
Friends, permanently involved in friendships	.2918/ p =.011 .3577/ p = .003	.3564/ p = .002 .3624/ p = .003	.2070/ p = NS -.0739/ p = NS	.3448/ p = .002 .0435/ p = NS	-.0437/ p = NS .0613/ p = NS	.0235/ p = NS -.2259/ p = NS	.3565/ p = .002 .2000/ p = NS
Friends, attached to friends	.4146/ p = .000 .4697/ p = .000	.5107/ p = .000 .4802/ p = .000	.2894/ p = .011 .1525/ p = NS	.4686/ p = .000 .1618/ p = NS	-.0260/ p = NS .0883/ p = NS	.0046/ p = NS -.3340/ p = NS	.5113/ p = .000 .2672/ p = NS
Friends, positive towards future friendships	.4067/ p = .000 .4912/ p =.000	.5133/ p = .000 .4706/ p =.000	.2876/ p = .012 .2234/ p = NS	.4465/ p = .000 .1325/ p = NS	.0150/ p = NS .740/ p = NS	-.0243/ p = NS -.4704/ p =.004	.5117/ p = .000 .1847/ p = NS
Leisure, socially oriented in leisure activities	.3859/ p = .001 .1495/ p = NS	.2209/ p = NS .1914/ p = NS	.1450/ p = NS -.0166/ p = NS	.2838/ p = .013 -.0758/ p = NS	.0078/ p = NS .1904/ p = NS	-.0200/ p = NS -.3873/ p = .020	.2712/ p = .019 -.0805/ p = NS

The first row of numbers in the cells concern individuals from divorced families and the second one those from intact families.

Comparison of the correlation coefficients for the possible selves reported by Greek and English divorcees' offspring

Table 39 indicates that the more committed to friendships Greek individuals perceive themselves, the less positive representation of self they report regarding being confident of making relationships work and being committed to their future family life/having a positive model of self as married. This is not the case for the English participants where there is a positive correlation between individuals' representation of self regarding being prepared to be committed to friends and being also committed/possessing a positive model of self as married and being confident

about making relationships work (Table 41).

This might be understood in terms of the value set on family in the Greek society and the low rate of divorce. Given this, Greek divorcees' offspring may feel stigmatised (Amato and Keith, 1991; Giddens, 1993; Frude, 1993). They possibly experience high stress during the divorce and try to counterbalance it by being oriented to people outside the family environment, having an alternative network of relationships or point of reference. In the UK where divorce is commonplace, it is not perceived as shameful (Giddens, 1993; Frude, 1993). Individuals may maintain a consistency in the nature of cognitive schemata regarding relationships with family members and other kinds of relationships like friendships. Consequently, individuals may not look for a substitute for the family. In a highly individualistic society where the rate of divorce is high, divorcees' offspring seem to be oriented to people outside the family (friends and colleagues).

CHAPTER 10

POSSIBLE SELVES DIFFERENTIATED BY PARTICIPANT’S DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The effects of demographic characteristics (gender, marital status, educational level and also father’s (usually the non-custodial parent) educational level) on the possible selves reported by (a) individuals from divorced and intact families and (b) Greek and English divorcees’ offspring are explored here. A series of analysis of variance was employed. The tables present the significant main effects and the interaction effects emerging from the analysis of variance.

Gender differences

Analysis of variance was undertaken to identify the effect of gender on the possible selves explored in the study. Tables 42 and 43 show that divorcees’ female offspring and Greek female participants are more keen on developing relationships with colleagues and being involved in stable/consistent relationships with them, than their male counterparts.

Table 42: Possible selves differentiating between male and female divorcees' offspring.

Greek and English divorcee's offspring (d.f.=1/N=164)	Females Mean	S.D.	Males Mean	S. D.	F	Sign. of F
Keen on relationships with colleagues	21.10	3.85	19.43	4.47	6.27	.013
Stable, consistent relationships with colleagues	11.36	2.82	9.92	3.33	8.03	.005

Table 43: Possible selves differentiating between Greek males and females.

Gender of Greek participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=150)	Females Means	S.D.	Males Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Keen on relationships with colleagues	19.83	3.48	18.38	4.22	1.50	.036

For the English sample, males are more ambitious and oriented to career than females (Table 44). Males also reported themselves more satisfied in relationships than their females counterparts.

Table 44: Possible selves differentiating between English males and females.

English participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=110)	Females Means	S.D.	Males Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Satisfied in relationships	16.58	4.32	18.49	3.57	4.89	.029
Career oriented	18.53	5.50	21.28	5.34	5.60	.020
Ambitious	13.49	4.44	16.47	4.18	11.58	.001

Although gender differences are indicated in the literature as a demographic characteristic which



affects many dimensions of offspring's lives (Shook and Jurich, 1992), the findings reported here do not indicate many significant gender effects on the possible selves explored in the study.

*The effects of individuals' (the whole sample) gender in conjunction with the status of parental family on possible selves.*

Tables 45 and 46 indicate only few significant interaction effects between individual's gender and the status of parental family (divorced-intact) on possible selves concerning relationships with friends, colleagues, career and family. For the UK sample, Table 45 indicates that males from divorced families scored lower on being close to friends than their counterparts from intact families, while females from divorced families scored higher than males and their counterparts from intact families. This may imply that divorcees' female offspring perceive themselves more oriented to future friendships than those from intact families in an attempt to have friendships to substitute for family relationships (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Demo and Acock, 1988). This may be females' way of coping with parental divorce, related to their gender identity, while males may adopt different strategies. Males may adopt a withdrawal pattern of behaviour compared to their counterparts from intact families. Parental divorce possibly provides male participants with negative cognitions of self regarding being involved in close relationships with friends in the future since they scored lower than their counterparts from intact families. For the English sample (Table 45), the difference in scores of males and females from intact families is considerably smaller than for divorcees' offspring. They appear to be almost equally oriented to friends.

*Table 45: Interaction effects of English participants' status of parental family by gender on possible selves regarding future relationships with friends and colleagues.*

English participants X Gender (N=105)	Intact females	Intact males	Divorced females	Divorced males	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Attached-committed to friendships	46.00	47.56	47.45	43.60	4.90	.029
Making close relationships with friends	19.21	19.80	20.00	18.05	6.25	.014
Open to socialising with colleagues	9.79	9.44	10.47	9.65	5.01	.027

Table 45 also indicates that both male and female English divorcees' offspring scored higher on socialising with colleagues than their counterparts from intact families although this was marked for the females. This may reflect findings (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988) indicating that

conflicts between parents and parent’s absence combined with reduced parental ties affect parent-child relationships and increase the extent to which offspring may rely more on peers for comfort and direction. English divorcees’ offspring’s orientation to colleagues may also be related to their relationship with the occupational environment which appears to constitute a considerably significant aspect of their lives (Burns, 1995).

For Greek participants the significant interaction effects of gender and the status of parental family concern the possible self regarding avoiding parental mistakes. Table 46 indicates that females from divorced families scored higher but almost equal to their counterparts from intact families on the possible selves about avoiding parental mistakes whereas males from divorced families scored considerably lower than their counterparts from intact families.

*Table 46: Interaction effects of Greek participants' status of parental family by gender on a possible self regarding family.*

Greek participants X Gender (N=150)	Intact females	Intact males	Divorced females	Divorced males	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Avoiding parental mistakes	18.28	20.17	18.34	17.53	6.41	.012

In contrast, Greek females from intact families are less oriented than males from intact families to working towards avoiding parental mistakes (Table 46). Explanations for such gender differences, are likely to be complex and may depend on the gender identity of males and females in the Greek society. In divorced families, females are more oriented than males to avoiding parental mistakes. This may make more environmental cues accessible to females, according to the theory of possible selves (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989) perhaps increasing the possibility of them avoiding actually parents’ mistakes in their own marriage.

***Marital status of participants***

The marital status of the participants varied. Some of them were single and some married. The effect of this on possible selves was explored. For the Greek participants (Table 47), the analysis of variance revealed that single individuals were more ambitious in career, oriented to friends and reported themselves more likely to avoiding parental mistakes.

*Table 47: Possible selves differentiating between Greek single and married individuals.*

Greek participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=136)	Single Means	S.D.	Married Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Highly protective towards children	12.04	3.89	14.85	4.36	14.24	.000
Avoiding parental mistakes	19.09	2.81	17.16	3.43	11.79	.001
Attached-committed to friendships	14.97	3.17	11.87	6.46	4.07	.046
Prepared to be committed to friendships	13.05	3.11	11.42	3.04	7.62	.007
Permanently involve in friendships	12.71	3.14	11.53	2.50	1.13	.044
Ambitious	15.97	3.64	14.31	3.15	6.21	.014

Single UK participants were more oriented to relationships with colleagues than their married counterparts (Table 48).

*Table 48: Possible selves differentiating between single and married English participants.*

English participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=110)	Single Means	S.D.	Married Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Open to socialising with colleagues	10.07	1.76	8.09	2.00	5.15	.020

Considering divorcees' offspring (Table 49), married offspring were more optimistic about relationships, confident about making relationships work, positive towards future family life. Similar to these findings, Greek married individuals reported themselves more protective towards children (Table 47). Greek single individuals scored higher than their married counterparts concerning avoiding parental mistakes. This finding possibly suggests that Greeks start their marital life with positive representations of self relating to a successful marriage. This seems to follow Markus and Sentis (1982) suggestion that for most people the majority of structures in the self-system are those that promote a positive view of one's self and engender positive affect. However, they may fail to cope effectively with the difficulties they may encounter in their marital life or residues of previous experiences of parental divorce may dominate married divorcees' offspring working self-concept. They may have negative experiences which shape future actions (Nurius, 1991).

*Table 49: Possible selves differentiating between single and married divorcees' offspring.*

Greek and English divorcee's offspring (d.f.=1/N=164)	Single Mean	S.D.	Married Mean	S. D.	F	Sign. of F
Optimistic about relationships	71.99	12.10	79.25	11.75	11.16	.001
Confident about making relationships work	12.68	2.66	13.80	2.48	5.78	.017
Positive representation of self regarding future family life	163.44	21.75	175.65	21.22	9.97	.002



*The effects of individuals' marital status in conjunction with the status of parental family on possible selves*

In the Greek sample, there are significant interaction effects between the status of parental family (divorced-intact) and individuals' marital status on the possible selves concerning family life and personal relationships (Table 50).

*Table 50: Interaction effects of Greek participants' status of parental family by marital status on possible selves about future family life/relationships.*

Greek participants X Marital status (N=136)	Intact single	Intact married	Divorced single	Divorced married	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Optimistic about relationships	72.01	78.55	76.55	76.60	3.99	.048
Confident about making relationships work	12.83	14.45	13.96	13.64	5.35	.022
Avoiding parental mistakes	18.28	17.79	19.89	16.66	6.53	.012

Concerning the Greek sample, Table 50 indicates that single divorcees' offspring scored higher than their counterparts from intact families on being optimistic about relationships, confident about making relationships work and working towards avoiding parental mistakes in their own marital life while married divorcee's offspring scored lower than those from intact families on these possible selves. Single divorcees' offspring may have an idealised positive possible self about family life. This suggestion is supported by the information emerging from the interviews regarding divorcees' offspring family life. This strong positive representation of self reported by single divorcees' offspring seems to diminish when faced with real life, their own life. This finding seems to be consistent with previous studies (Wallerstein, 1985; Wallerstein et al, 1988) indicating that divorcees' offspring had ideas of a lasting marriage but were frightened about repeating their parents' unhappy marriage. The finding regarding married divorcees' offspring also appears to illuminate the intergenerational transmission of marital instability (Pope and Mueller, 1976). Divorcees' offspring may recall unhappy situations they experienced in their parental family (vicarious experiences) with regard to their parents' marital relationship/divorce when they are in similar circumstances, in their marriage (Bandura, 1982). If this is the case, their ability to have control over situations and events taking part in family life is diminished since the core representations of selves (as divorcees, acquired by the parental life) which are transituationally salient and put themselves into action (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989), are of a

negative nature (Nurius, 1991). These suggestions are supported by the within groups differences (divorced-intact) according to which: married individuals from intact families scored higher than their single counterparts regarding being confident in succeeding in their future family life, and married individuals from divorced families scored almost equal but lower than single individuals on this possible self. This may indicate that confidence in having a successful relationship and family life is reduced for divorcees' offspring during the course of their marital life implying that being married demonstrates to them that they are less able to cope with the difficulties they encounter in their marriage than they had previously thought.

The statistical analysis did not indicate any significant interaction effects between UK individuals from divorced and intact families and individual's marital status and also between divorcees' offspring nationality and individual's marital status. The marital status of individuals who live in a highly individualistic society may not affect the representations of selves explored in the study since they have a dominant individualist-centred self-schema. If this is the case, this may throw light on the non significant interaction effects between UK and Greek divorcees' offspring by their marital status.

#### *The effect of father's educational level on possible selves*

Focusing on the possible selves affected by father's educational level, Tables 51, 52 and 53 indicate that these possible selves mainly concern future family life and relationships. For the UK sample, those whose father was educated to A level standard were more positive about family, confident of making relationships work and highly protective towards children than their counterparts whose father was more highly educated. Similar findings are indicated for divorcees' offspring overall (Table 52) and Greek (Table 53) participants. Greek individuals whose fathers were lower educated were more committed to family than their counterparts whose fathers were higher educated.

The possible self concerning being highly protective towards children differentiates UK, Greek individuals and divorcees' offspring. The finding that the divorcees' offspring of less well educated fathers are more highly protective of their children may be a reflection of a lack of non-custodial parental interest in themselves as children. The information emerging from the

interviews indicated that parental divorce and parents’ lack of concern for their children may lead them to try to protect their own children from unhappy experiences.

Table 51: Possible selves differentiating between English individuals whose parents were lower and higher educated.

English participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=110)	Lower educated father Means	S.D.	Higher educated father Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Confident about making relationships work	12.60	2.85	11.54	2.55	4.00	.040
Highly protective towards children	13.50	4.19	11.74	4.16	4.04	.040

The exploration of the effects of father’s educational level indicated that this affects possible selves reported by divorcees’ offspring (Table 52) regarding relationships with friends and possible selves reported by Greek participants (Table 53) concerning relationships with colleagues.

Table 52: Possible selves differentiating between divorcees’ offspring whose parents were lower and higher educated.

Greek and English divorcee’s offspring (d.f.=1/N=164)	Lower educated father Mean	S.D.	Higher educated father Mean	S. D.	F	Sign. of F
Highly protective towards children	13.29	4.45	11.57	3.71	6.22	.014
Keen on friendships	14.70	4.75	13.17	4.29	11.41	.030

For divorcees’ offspring, Table 52 indicates that those whose father is less well educated are more keen on friendships than those whose fathers were more highly educated. These findings might be understood in terms of previous studies indicating that less well educated parents have less regular contact with their children after divorce (Emery, 1988; Furstenberg et al, 1983). In these circumstances, individuals may look to friendships as a substitute for the family life and family desires (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988).

Table 53: Possible selves differentiating between Greek individuals whose fathers were lower and higher educated.

Greek participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=150)	Lower educated father Means	S.D.	Higher educated father Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Committed to family, positive model of marriage	35.02	4.55	33.40	4.22	4.42	.037
Highly protective towards children	14.14	4.43	11.82	3.58	10.56	.001
Keen on relationships with colleagues	18.83	3.69	20.15	3.84	4.06	.046
Open to socialising with colleagues	8.92	2.34	9.68	1.86	3.89	.050



Greek individuals whose fathers were more highly educated were more keen and open to socialising with colleagues than those whose fathers were lower educated (Table 53). Father's higher educational status may provide a model for relationships with colleagues since this may be a pattern of behaviour adopted by their father.

*The effects of fathers' educational level in conjunction with the status of parental family on possible selves*

The only significant interaction effects between divorced and intact families and father's educational level concern the possible selves related to future friendships reported by the UK individuals (Table 54). Table 54 indicates that father's educational level by the status of participants' parental family (those from divorced and intact families) affect individuals' possible selves regarding being keen on friendships and readily involved in new friendships. Individuals from divorced families whose fathers were lower educated scored higher than their counterparts from intact families on the possible selves regarding being keen on and being readily involved in friendships. This is possibly linked with previous studies reporting that less educated fathers do not keep regular contact with their children after the divorce (Emery, 1988; Furstenberg et al, 1983) which may raise offspring's need for close relationships with people outside the family (Guidibaldi and Perry, 1985; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Demo and Acock, 1988). These relationships may substitute for the broken or faded relationship offspring experienced with the non-custodial parent.

If this is the case, this may mean that UK individuals to have a less positive representation of self regarding avoiding parental mistakes (Table 54). Individuals from divorced families whose fathers were highly educated scored lower than their counterparts from intact families on possible selves regarding future friendships but higher on avoiding parental mistakes. Perhaps, higher educated fathers maintain consistent contact with their children which provides them with emotional satisfaction and feelings of acceptance (White et al, 1985; Shook and Jurich, 1992). They may also have realised through the constant contact with their father the negative influence of the divorce in their lives.

Table 54: Interaction effects of English participants' status of parental family by father's educational level on possible selves about future relationships with friends and future family life.

English participants X Father's educational level (N=109)	Intact Lower educated	Intact Higher educated	Divorced Lower educated	Divorced Higher educated	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Avoiding parental mistakes	18.20	15.40	16.50	16.91	5.69	.019
Keen on friendships	24.17	25.54	26.11	24.00	4.95	.025
Readily involved in friendships	16.22	17.83	17.86	16.20	5.88	.017

The statistical analysis did not indicate any significant interaction effects between divorced and intact families and father's educational level for Greek individuals and also between divorcees' offspring's nationality and the father's educational level.

*Individuals' educational level*

Tables 55, 56 and 57 indicate that the individual's educational level affects a number of possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring and UK and Greek participants when explored separately.

Table 55: Possible selves differentiating between lower and higher educated divorcees' offspring.

Greek and English divorcee's offspring d.f.=1/N=164)	Lower educated Mean	S.D.	Higher educated Mean	S. D.	F	Sign. of F
Committed to family/ positive model of married	34.69	5.91	31.34	4.82	14.86	.000
Highly protective towards children	15.58	4.22	11.41	3.94	38.86	.000
Career oriented	19.07	5.44	21.94	4.96	9.90	.000
Ambitious	13.95	4.25	25.92	3.87	8.52	.000
Focused on a particular occupation	5.11	2.34	6.01	2.37	4.50	.030
Keen on relationships with colleagues	19.18	4.51	21.23	3.83	10.00	.000
Open to socialising with colleagues	9.10	2.60	9.92	1.87	15.24	.018
Stable/consistent relationships with colleagues	10.07	3.36	11.31	2.87	6.01	.010

Not surprisingly, higher educated divorcees' offspring are more career oriented, ambitious and focused on a particular occupation than their lower educated counterparts (Table 55). This is also the case for UK participants (Table 56). Divorcees' offspring (Table 55), UK (Table 56) and Greek individuals (Table 57) were also more open and keen on developing relationships with colleagues.

*Table 56: Possible selves differentiating between higher and lower educated English individuals.*

English participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=110)	Lower educated Means	S.D.	Higher educated Means	S. D.	F	Sign of F
Highly protective towards children	15.34	4.90	12.04	3.76	9.33	.003
Ambitious	12.15	4.23	15.34	4.31	7.96	.006
Career oriented	17.09	5.41	20.34	5.32	4.83	.030
Keen on relationships with colleagues	18.30	4.12	21.80	3.83	11.66	.000
Open to socialising with colleagues	8.68	2.13	10.00	1.72	7.18	.000

Divorcees' higher educated offspring were also more positive regarding being involved in stable/consistent relationships at work. These findings may be perceived as complementary to the possible selves reported by highly educated individuals regarding family life. The higher educated participants were less positive towards relationships and family than their lower educated counterparts. This was the case for divorcees' offspring overall and UK and Greek samples when explored separately. The common possible self for all the subsamples, affected by individual's educational level was related to being highly protective towards children. There are a range of possible explanations for this. It may reflect the level of independence they experienced in their own upbringing, the level of self-confidence which they wish to instil in their children and their aspirations for their children. Focusing on the overall divorcees' offspring sample and Greek participants separately, it was found that higher educated individuals were less committed to family and had a less positive model of self as married and protective towards children than their lower educated counterparts. These findings appear to support studies indicating that an individuals' focus on occupation and self-actualisation in terms of personal and career fulfilment is related to less interest and involvement in family life (Burns, 1995). Perhaps, their preoccupation with their job makes them less highly committed and dedicated to family, higher educational level may make them less authoritative parents. Greek higher educated individuals were more satisfied in relationships than their lower educated counterparts (Table 57) which may be related to their self-concept and the perception of their ability to cope with problems in relationships.

For the Greek sample, Table 57 indicates that individuals' educational level affects more possible selves than those affected by other demographic characteristics. These concern future friendships, relationships with colleagues and family life. Orientation and eagerness for social interactions may relate to greater self-confidence perhaps related to the value placed on education in Greek



society (Kataki, 1984).

Table 57: Possible selves differentiating between higher and lower educated Greek individuals.

Greek participants from divorced and intact families (d.f.=1/ N=150)	Lower educated Means	S.D.	Higher educated Means	S.D.	F	Sign of F
Satisfied in relationships	15.79	4.91	17.81	4.08	5.82	.017
Committed to family, positive model of married	36.51	4.64	33.60	4.27	11.21	.001
Highly protective towards children	15.38	4.18	12.41	4.08	13.53	.000
Attached-committed to friendships	41.28	8.89	44.65	7.39	4.26	.041
Prepared to be committed to friendships	11.08	3.63	12.92	2.89	8.70	.004
Keen on relationships with colleagues	17.80	3.88	19.91	3.61	7.89	.006
Open to socialising with colleagues	8.25	2.65	10.52	1.94	7.99	.005

*The effects of divorcees' offspring's educational level in conjunction with their nationality (Greek, English)*

The only significant interaction between divorcees' offspring nationality (Greek and English) and the demographic characteristics of participants concerns the individual's educational level (Table 58). Education seems to be a mediating factor for their representations of selves regarding future friendships and being satisfied in relationships.

Table 58: Significant interaction effects of nationality of divorcees' offspring by their educational level on the possible selves regarding future relationships/family and friendships.

Greek and English divorcees' offspring X Educational level (N=164)	Greek Lower educated	Greek Higher educated	English Lower educated	English Higher educated	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Satisfied in relationships	16.50	18.15	19.21	16.76	7.36	.007
Prepared to be committed to friends	10.92	13.42	14.39	13.94	8.57	.000
Permanently involved in friendships	10.65	13.01	13.26	12.75	7.30	.008

Table 58 indicates that lower-educated Greek divorcees' offspring scored lower than their English counterparts on the possible self regarding being satisfied in relationships. This may be related to a more general less positive self-concept, since they live in a society which sets a high value on education (Tsoukalas, 1977; Kataki, 1984). They may also have jobs of lower status and income. Highly educated Greek divorcees' offspring scored higher than their English counterparts on this possible self (Table 58). It might be that higher levels of education are linked to a stronger positive cognition of self for Greek than English individuals. How this might link to relationships is not clear. Education seems to have a positive influence on the representations

of Greek individuals from divorced families regarding relationships. English individuals do not seem to benefit from higher education in terms of their representations of selves regarding being satisfied in relationships. Lower-educated English divorcees' offspring scored higher than their higher-educated counterparts; higher educated Greek divorcees' offspring scored higher than their lower educated counterparts. This may reflect the role of education in each society/culture. The percentage of well educated individuals in Greece is higher than that in other European countries; education has a stronger social value for Greeks than other Europeans (Tsoukalas, 1977; Kataki, 1984). Individuals' perception of self-efficacy emerging from social attitudes towards education in each society may affect their representation of self regarding being satisfied in personal relationships.

Table 58 indicates that English lower educated divorcees' offspring scored higher than their Greek counterparts on the possible selves regarding being prepared to be committed to and permanently involved in friendships. Higher educated English divorcees' offspring scored higher than their Greek counterparts regarding being prepared to be committed to friends. However, they scored lower than their Greek counterparts on possible selves concerning being permanently involved in friendships. Table 58 indicates that although the Greek and English higher educated individuals scored similarly on the possible selves about future friendships, the lower educated Greek divorcees' offspring scored considerably lower than their English counterparts. The social acceptance of divorce in the UK may explain the higher score of English than Greek lower educated divorcees' offspring regarding relationships with friends. This pattern of scores reflects the differences in possible selves between the two nationalities. English individuals are more oriented to relationships with friends and colleagues than their Greek counterparts. Table 58 also indicates that Greek highly educated individuals perceive themselves more prepared to be committed to friendships and permanently involved in them than their lower educated counterparts. Perhaps, they perceive themselves as less deviant and stigmatised by the divorce than the lower educated (Frable et al, 1990). A higher level of education may make them feel more confident in socialising and they may have a more positive image of self, than their lower educated counterparts. Perhaps, they perceive themselves able to cope with possible problems with friends as a result of their experiences as divorcees' offspring. However, English highly educated participants scored lower on the possible selves regarding friendships than their lower

educated counterparts. They may perceive themselves able to cope with their problems by themselves and do not experience the need to turn to friends for support.

The statistical analysis indicated a significant interaction effect between the status of parental family (divorced-intact) and individual's educational level only for the Greek sample. Only one possible self was affected. This possible self concerns relationships with colleagues.

Table 59: Interaction effects of Greek participants' status of parental family by individual's educational level on a possible self regarding relationships with colleagues.

Greek participants X Individual's educational level (N=150)	Intact Lower educated	Intact Higher educated	Divorced Lower educated	Divorced Higher educated	F d.f (1)	Sign. of F
Stable, consistent relationships with colleagues	10.27	10.09	8.92	10.89	4.16	.043

Table 59 indicates that divorcees' offspring who were lower educated scored lower than their counterparts from intact families on the representation of self regarding being involved in consistent and stable relationships with colleagues. There may be a number of explanations for this. Perhaps, the experience of parental divorce is perceived by lower educated individuals as a strong negative life event which can hardly be communicated to others (Frable et al, 1990). In the occupational environment perhaps one's capacity to deal with other's feelings is of the first importance, and the interplay of needs to like and be liked giving pleasure and appreciation and acceptance are all important (Parsons and Bales, 1955). They may also transfer the primary experience of parental broken relationship and possibly the negative feelings following the belief that no relationship (even close ones) lasts for ever, to other kinds of close relationships with people (relationships with colleagues). Consequently, they may not easily invest in relationships. This finding is close to what has already been indicated by research regarding divorcees' offspring being less sociable, have fewer friends and spending less time with them (Santrock, 1975). Also, highly educated individuals from divorced families scored higher than those from intact families on being involved in consistent and stable relationships with colleagues. Higher education may provide them with a positive self which makes them more readily socialise with people. Such a suggestion may imply that they are less affected by the stigma attached to them as divorcees' offspring (Amato and Keith, 1991; Giddens, 1993; Frude, 1993), living in a society which sets high value on the family and consequently looks negatively on the dissolution of it.



### Summary.

Summarising, the demographic characteristic which seems to affect many of the possible selves reported concerns *educational level*. This is related not only to possible selves regarding career and relationships with colleagues but also to possible selves regarding relationships and family life. More highly educated individuals scored higher on possible selves relating to career and relationships with colleagues but lower on possible selves regarding relationships and family life. This is the case when Greek and English divorcees' offspring were compared across the whole sample. It was also the case for the whole Greek sample and partially for the English sample where the lower educated scored higher than their higher educated counterparts on possible selves regarding being highly protective towards children. The interaction effects of divorcees' offspring educational level by their nationality indicated that lower educated Greek individuals are less oriented to friends and less satisfied in their relationships than their English counterparts and the more highly educated Greek divorcees' offspring. This finding may reflect the role of education in Greek society.

*Marital status* also seems to affect possible selves regarding career, family and friends. Single individuals scored higher than their married counterparts on possible selves regarding career and friends while married individuals were more positive about personal relationships and family life but not the possible self regarding avoiding parental mistakes where single individuals scored higher. This was the case for divorcees' offspring overall, for the Greek but not for the English sample when explored separately. Such a finding may indicate that for the English sample, marital status does not affect individuals' representations of selves regarding relationships/family life, friendships and career. Marriage does not necessarily imply an individuals' shift to a family focus. This seems to indicate a cultural difference. The only effect of marital status for UK individuals relates to their relationships with colleagues. This possibly reflects the role of the work environment in their lives, as a place where they develop significant relationships. For Greek individuals, *marital status in conjunction with the status of parental family* affects possible selves regarding future family life. Single divorcees' offspring are more positive about their future relationships/family life while married divorcees' offspring scored lower than those from intact families.

*Gender* differences relate to relationships with colleagues and career. Females scored higher than males on possible selves regarding relationships at work but males were more ambitious in career than females. The interaction effects of the status of parental family by *gender* indicated that UK divorcees' female offspring were more oriented to relationships with friends and colleagues than their male counterparts and females from intact families. In the Greek sample, the only gender difference in interaction with the status of parental family concerned the possible self regarding avoiding parental mistakes. Greek female offspring from divorced parents reported a more positive representations of self towards avoiding parental mistakes than males and their counterparts from intact families. This may indicate the importance of the family in Greek society, particularly for females. It may also imply a disinhibitory effect of parental divorce for males who seem to be less oriented than females and their counterparts from intact families towards avoiding parental mistakes in their own marital life.

*Father's educational level* appears to affect individuals' representations of selves regarding personal relationships/family and relationships with friends and colleagues. For divorcees' offspring, the possible self it affects concerns being highly protective towards children. This may reflect lower educated fathers' attempt to prevent their children having unhappy experiences. Individuals whose father is lower educated are more oriented to family and friends than those whose father is higher educated. However, those whose father is higher educated scored higher on relationships with colleagues. The interaction effect of father's educational level by the status of parental family indicated a similar pattern of scores which seems to support previous studies regarding the less regular contact divorced fathers keep with their children (Furstenberg et al, 1983) which negatively affects their adjustment. English divorcees' offspring whose fathers were less well educated scored higher on relationships with friends than their counterparts from intact families and those whose fathers were better educated. In the English sample, fathers' higher education seems to be beneficial for individuals from divorced than intact families for positive possible selves regarding avoiding parental mistakes.

CHAPTER 11

THE WAY THE DIVORCE SCENARIO AFFECTS INDIVIDUAL'S POSSIBLE SELVES.

One of the main research questions was to identify the effects of different divorce scenarios on the possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring. It was hypothesised that different divorce circumstances would lead to different patterns of possible selves. Analysis of variance was used to link the divorce scenario with possible selves. The analysis was restricted to those possible selves that differentiated individuals from divorced and intact families and the possible selves differentiating Greek from UK divorcees' offspring.

*Possible selves concerning being keen on socialising with friends*

Being keen on socialising with colleagues only differentiated Greek individuals from divorced and intact families. Table 60 indicates that the possible selves reported by the Greeks regarding being keen on developing friendships are related to their relationships with the non-custodial parent, the step-parent and the time of the remarriage of the non-custodial parent.

Table 60: Analysis of variance of mean scores reported by Greek divorcees' offspring on possible selves regarding being keen on friendships.

Greek divorcees' offspring		Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Individual's current relationship with his/her stepparent (N=23, d.f.= 2)	Pretty good	21.09	2.87	5.43	.030
	Very good	18.38	3.98		
Nature of child/non-custodial parent eventual relationship (N=75, d.f.= 3)	Bad	20.70	3.94	2.93	.039
	Not bad	24.18	3.69		
	Quite good	22.74	3.59		
	Very good	24.00	4.05		
My non-custodial parent remarried after the divorce (N=47, d.f.= 1)	In the first two years	24.40	3.84	2.93	.010
	After the first two years	21.59	2.71		

For the Greek sample (Table 60), the analyses showed that individuals who experienced a fairly good relationship with the step-parent were more keen on friendships than those who reported a very good relationship with the step-parent. Perhaps, the individual's relationship with the step-parent may be mediated by other divorce circumstances and mainly by his/her relationship with the custodial parent, the mother. Table 60 shows that individuals who reported either a very good current relationship or a not bad eventual relationship with the non-custodial parent scored higher on possible selves regarding being keen on developing friendships than those who reported a



deteriorating relationship with the non-custodial parent (usually the father). Contact with the non-custodial parent possibly provides offspring with emotional security which may benefit the relationships they develop in their lives with other people. Greek individuals who reported that the non-custodial parent got married in the first two years after the divorce, a period which is reported to be highly stressful (Johnson, 1986), perceived themselves keener on friendships than those whose non-custodial parent got married later. It may be that friends are sources of support for divorcees' offspring when they experience unhappy situations.

*Possible selves concerning being undemanding with friends*

Being undemanding with friends differentiated UK and Greek individuals from divorced and intact families. Tables 61 and 62 indicate the benefit of a good, conflict free relationship between the offspring and the non-custodial parent on offspring's representation of self concerning social life, in particular being undemanding with friends. Table 61 indicates that Greek divorcees' offspring who reported a high level of non-custodial parent's current interest in their lives scored higher on being undemanding with friends than those who reported a lack of non-custodial parent's current interest in them. The post-hoc Tukey test indicated that those who reported a very good relationship with the non-custodial parent scored higher on possible selves regarding being undemanding with friends than those who reported a deteriorating relationship with the non-custodial parent (Table 61). The analyses for the UK sample, (Table 62) indicate that divorcees' offspring who did not report conflicts with the non-custodial parent regarding their personal life, reported a more positive possible self regarding being undemanding with friends than those who did. The positive influence of happy child/non-custodial parent contact for the well-being of offspring has been indicated by previous studies (Cockett and Tripp, 1994; Hetherington et al, 1992) and is further supported by this study.

Tables 61 and 62 indicate also the negative effect of parents' arguments on offspring's possible self regarding being undemanding with friends and offspring's orientation to friends as sources of support.

*Table 61: Analysis of variance of mean scores reported by Greek divorcees' offspring on possible selves relating to being undemanding with friends.*

Greek divorcees' offspring		Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Individual's current relationship with his/her non-custodial parent (N=84, d.f.= 3)	Quite bad	4.85	1.66	2.75	.048
	Indifferent	5.92	1.95		
	Quite good	5.86	2.00		
	Very good	6.66	1.91		
Current active interest of the non-custodial parent in the individual's life (N=60, d.f.= 1)	No	5.35	1.89	4.62	.036
	Yes	6.52	2.18		
Individual's memories of being present during parents' arguments (N=79, d.f.= 3)	Almost never	5.47	2.09	2.74	.049
	Rarely	6.61	2.10		
	Quite often	6.33	1.93		
	Very often	5.05	1.55		

In the Greek sample (Table 61) the post-hoc Tukey test indicated no significant differences in the scores reported by offspring according to the frequency of their presence during parental conflicts. Table 62 indicates that for UK divorcees' offspring, those who reported themselves being almost never, rarely or quite often present at parental conflicts scored higher on being undemanding with friends than those who reported themselves very often present at parental conflicts. This may indicate that for Greek divorcees' offspring, the conflicts per se are related to the negative possible selves they experience. This is supported by the information emerging from the interviews where divorcees' offspring who experienced parental divorce reported mainly negative possible selves regarding family life and a preference for individualistic ways of leisure. The above findings may support previous studies emphasizing the detrimental effects of overall pre and post divorce parental conflicts on young adult offspring's personality, self-esteem (Holdnack, 1992) and interpersonal problems (Booth et al, 1984; Franklin et al, 1990; Gabardi and Rosen, 1992).

UK divorcees' offspring who reported that their non-custodial parent had a live-in partner scored higher on the possible self concerning being undemanding with friends than those who did not have such an experience. This may indicate that sharing the non-custodial parent (usually the father) with his partner may evoke negative feelings (Santrock et al, 1982) arising from the rejection they may perceive. This may turn divorcees' offspring to friends as substitutes for the relationship with the father. This suggestion is supported by the information emerging from the interviews. Interviewees who reported an unhappy relationship with the partner of the non-custodial parent described many positive possible selves relating to their future friendships. Such

negative feelings may make them less demanding with other people increasing socialisation as a possible substitute for their relationship with the father.

Table 62: Analysis of variance of mean scores reported by English divorcees' offspring on possible selves regarding being undemanding with friends.

English divorcees' offspring		Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Nature of individual's relationship with the custodial parent (N=65, d.f.= 2)	Quite unhappy	7.00	2.52	3.24	.046
	Quite good	8.21	1.67		
	Very good	8.73	1.98		
Conflicts with the custodial parent regarding possessiveness (N=62, d.f.= 1)	No	8.2	1.73	5.28	.021
	Yes	6.9	2.58		
Conflicts with the non-custodial parent regarding individual's personal life (N=51, d.f.= 1)	No	8.85	1.91	9.57	.003
	Yes	7.16	1.97		
After the divorce the non-custodial had a live in partner (N=54, d.f.=1)	No	7.44	2.43	5.03	.029
	Yes	8.75	1.77		
Individual's memories of being present during parents' arguments (N=74, d.f.=3)	Almost never	8.15	2.40	6.54	.001
	Rarely	9.21	1.58		
	Quite often	8.33	1.76		
	Very often	6.50	1.97		

Table 62 indicates that the better the relationships and the more free of conflicts regarding the custodial parents' feelings of possessiveness, the more undemanding with people English divorcees' offspring reported themselves to be regarding future friendships. The post-hoc Tukey test indicated a significant difference in the scores reported by individuals who experienced a relatively deteriorating or a very good relationship with the custodial parent. Those who reported a very good relationship with the custodial parent scored higher on the possible selves regarding being undemanding with friends than those who reported a relatively unhappy relationship with the non-custodial parent (usually the father).

*The possible self concerning being prepared to be committed to friends.*

Being prepared to be committed to friends differentiated Greek from UK divorcees' offspring. The interaction effects of nationality by divorce circumstances, presented in Tables 63, suggest that the divorce circumstances which affect the possible selves concerning being prepared to be committed to friendships mainly concern the relationship with the custodial parent and individual's level of involvement in the divorce.



Table 63: Interaction effects of the analysis of variance of mean scores according to individuals' nationality X circumstances of parental divorce, on the possible selves regarding being prepared to be committed to friends.

Possible selves regarding being prepared to be committed to friends					
Greek and English participants from divorced families		Greek Means	English Means	F	Sign. of F
Immediately after the divorce I had conflicts with my custodial parent: often=1/ rarely=0 (N=156, d.f.=1)	Rarely	12.41	14.50	5.18	.024
	Often	13.73	13.15		
Immediately after the divorce my relationships with the custodial parent was: pretty good=1/ quite bad=0 (N=152, d.f.=1)	Quite bad	15.33	13.86	5.74	.018
	Pretty good	12.42	14.22		
Nature of the relationship individuals always had with the custodial parent positive=1/ quite bad=0 (N=152, d.f.=1)	Quite bad	13.81	11.61	11.03	.001
	Positive	12.45	14.86		
Conflicts with my custodial parent because of her/his possessiveness: yes=1/ no=0 (N=132, d.f.=1)	No	12.72	14.35	4.50	.036
	Yes	13.10	12.07		
Individual's relationship with the stepparent: pretty good= 1/ quite deteriorated= 0	Quite bad	13.55	13.18	7.87	.006
	Pretty good	11.95	15.85		
At the beginning I visited my non-custodial parent: very often=3/ quite often=2/ rarely=1/ almost never=0 (N=147, d.f=3)	Almost never	12.28	14.00	5.17	.002
	Rarely	12.19	15.53		
	Quite often	14.26	13.03		
	Very often	11.53	14.92		
I was asked by my mother to behave in certain ways towards my father: yes=1/ no=0 (N=158, d.f.=1)	No	12.62	14.50	6.99	.009
	Yes	13.23	11.83		
I was asked to agree with my mother's account of the divorce: yes=1/ no=0 (N=144, d.f.=1)	No	12.72	14.34	4.46	.036
	Yes	13.48	12.30		
I was asked to approve of my mother's attitudes and decisions: yes=1/ no=0 (d.f.=1)	No	12.69	14.46	4.57	.034
	Yes	13.30	12.83		

The within group nationality differences (Table 63) indicate that Greek divorcees' offspring perceive themselves more prepared to be committed to friends when they experienced negative rather than positive circumstances of parental divorce. The particular circumstances of the divorce concern: having negative relationships with the custodial parent, the step-parent, regular contact with the non-custodial parent and the level of the individual's involvement in the divorce itself.

Greek participants whose parents involved them in parental arguments or in the overall divorce situation scored higher than their English counterparts on representations of selves regarding being committed to friendships (Table 63). Greeks who did not report such experiences scored lower than their English counterparts. Difficult experiences during parental divorce seem to be more traumatic for Greek than English divorcees' offspring and lead them to make committed relationships with friends. This may occur because they live in a society where the rate of divorce is low and divorce per se is perceived as stigmatising as compared with the situation in the English society. Sociological studies report that as more people end their marriages, the role of 'divorcee' and the process of becoming divorced is seen as less aberrant and less 'shameful', so

that individuals contemplating divorce do not perceive themselves as being socially stigmatised (Frude, 1993; Giddens, 1993). Greek divorcees' offspring may therefore need greater support during and after divorce than their UK equivalents.

Greek participants who were asked by their parents to adopt certain modes of behaviour and accept certain accounts of the divorce and its antecedents scored higher on the possible selves regarding being committed to friends than their Greek counterparts who did not have such experiences. This possibly indicates that pressure at home turns them towards investing in relationships outside the family (Demo and Acock, 1988; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988). The negative influence of the mother's involvement in father-child relationships after the divorce plays a significant role in offspring's intimate relationships (Bolgar et al., 1995). The detrimental effect of hostile alliances formed by parents against each other involving children precipitating feelings of confusion, conflict, guilt and hostility in children is also borne out by earlier studies (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Cockett and Tripp, 1994).

For the English sample, the score on possible selves regarding commitment to relationships with friends followed an opposite pattern to that in the Greek sample depending on the individuals' involvement in parental divorce. Participants who were not asked by their parents to adopt certain modes of behaviour and accept certain accounts of the divorce scored higher on possible selves regarding being committed to friendships.

One experience of parental divorce which differentiates the two nationality samples according to their scores on possible selves regarding being committed to friendships concerns the relationship between the individual and the custodial parent. English participants who reported a positive conflict free relationship scored higher on the possible selves regarding future friendships than those who reported a poor relationship with the custodial parent. In contrast, Greek individuals who experienced a conflict-ridden and poor relationship with the custodial parent scored higher on possible selves regarding friendships than those who reported a positive situation. Earlier research also indicates a positive relationship between mother's coercion (related to mother's failure to teach reasonable models of compliance) and the anxiety/withdrawal patterns of behaviour adopted by divorcees' adolescent offspring (Buehler

and Legg, 1992). Such poor relationships seem to turn Greek individuals outside the family to develop secure relationships with people on whom they can rely (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988).

This pattern of findings (Greek divorcees' offspring scored higher when they experienced negative divorce circumstances while English offspring scored higher when they experienced positive), is also the case for relationship with the stepparent. A positive relationship with him/her possibly provides English participants with a positive model of close relationships. This supports studies indicating the beneficial role of the stepparent in offspring's life when there is a stable maternal personal life (Bolgar et al, 1995) compared with unremarried and multiple remarried mothers. For Greek individuals the poor relationship with the stepparent seems to make the offspring turn to friends as alternative sources of support (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988).

Regarding the frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent, no clear pattern of effects is indicated. The focus is therefore on those circumstances where the difference in scores is the largest and applies to both nationalities. Greek participants who reported contact 'quite often' with the non-custodial parent scored higher on the possible self regarding being prepared to be committed to future friendships than their English counterparts and Greeks who reported frequent contact. English divorcees' offspring who reported frequent contact scored higher than their Greek counterparts and English individuals who reported contact 'quite often'. Frequent contact with the non-custodial parent seems to positively affect representations of selves regarding future friendships in the UK sample, while Greek individuals who were oriented to friends were those who reported less contact. Loss of contact with the non-custodial parent or inconsistent contact may be of greater importance for the Greek participants who may then perceive friends as substitutes for the absent parent. The information emerging from the interviews, suggested that the non-custodial parent was perceived by the majority as the one who had left and ruined family life. Child/non-custodial parent contact therefore is important since it provides children with reassurance that the departed parent still cares for them (White et al, 1985; Shook and Jurich, 1992). For the Greek divorcees' offspring, limited contact with the non-custodial parent is perhaps perceived as a lack of interest. The importance of the relationship with the non-custodial



parent for the Greek participants is illustrated in their responses to the open-ended questions. They indicate Greek individuals' deep long-term involvement in relationships with parents, after the divorce. For instance, more Greek than English divorcees' offspring reported that they were still trying to improve their relationships with the custodial parent and that their relationship with the non-custodial parent was still deteriorating. In contrast, more English than Greek divorcees' offspring reported themselves as detached from the parental family after the divorce. They lived away but kept some contact with the parents.

The pattern of scores for the two nationality groups indicates that English divorcee's offspring who have experienced positive circumstances in the course of parental divorce e.g. a positive relationship with the custodial parent and stepparent and no involvement in the parental divorce itself (Table 63), scored higher than their Greek counterparts on the possible selves regarding being committed towards friends; while Greek individuals who experienced negative situations scored higher than their English counterparts. This pattern of scores may reflect cultural differences. Although English individuals overall are more oriented to friendships than their Greek counterparts, when it comes to adverse divorce events, it is Greek individuals who score higher than English.

#### *Positive representation of self about future friendships*

This possible self differentiated Greek from UK divorcees' offspring. The patterns of scores in relation to this possible self are the same as those affecting the possible self concerning being committed to future friendships (see Table 65). In addition to the circumstances presented in Table 63, the possible self about being positive towards friendships is affected by pre-divorce family life and individual's being asked to approve of the father's attitudes and decisions.

The importance of the individual's involvement in parental divorce is supported by the significant main effects of the analysis of variance (Table 64). Regardless of the participant's nationality, individuals who were asked by their mother to behave in particular ways towards the father and those asked to approve their father's attitudes and decisions scored lower on being

oriented towards friends.

This is further elucidated by the data from the interviews e.g.

S11'...as things went on it was harder for me to tell my mother that I saw my father again and he was bombarding me with his opinions about the divorce again and I felt very much in the middle. I was asked to take a side but when I saw what was happening it was an argument between my mother and I had, I said 'look, ... and you have to see it from my point of view, I have been pulled between the two of you and I told her about what happened', I told her that she is my mother but I wouldn't be at the centre of this divorce and I said it was not me that my father divorced, it was you. Please, stop pulling me, stop targeting me between... a sort of ... if you have got that to say to my father say it to his face, I said exactly the same things to my father...'.

Concerning pre-divorce family life, a holistic perception of the individuals' experiences in parental family life may be necessary to understand the effects of parental divorce on offspring's overall representations of selves concerning future friendships. Table 65 indicates that a positive pre-divorce family life is beneficial for English divorcees' offspring's possible selves regarding being positive towards friends but not for their Greek counterparts. English individuals who reported many good memories of pre-divorce family life scored higher on the possible selves regarding being positive towards friends than their counterparts who reported few or none. This suggests that the effects of divorce may be mediated by the quality of family life pre-divorce and the social context within which they occur (Cockett and Tripp, 1994). In the Greek sample, individuals who scored higher on the possible self regarding being positive towards friends did not report a happy pre-divorce family life. This may indicate their orientation to friends as reference and support groups.

Table 64: Divorce circumstances differentiating participants' possible selves relating to being positive towards friendships, according to the nature of these circumstances.

Greek and English participants from divorced families	No Means	S.D	Yes Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
I was asked by my mother to behave in certain ways towards my father (N=158, d.f.=1)	70.28	11.12	66.28	12.70	5.18	.024
I was asked to approve of the father's attitudes and decisions (N=143, d.f.=1)	70.81	11.12	66.84	12.22	4.20	.042

Table 65: Interaction effects of the analysis of variance of mean scores according to individuals' nationality X circumstances of parental divorce, on the possible selves regarding being positive towards friends.

Possible selves regarding being positive towards friends					
Greek and English participants from divorced families		Greek Means	English Means	F	Sign. of F
Memories of good times with the family: 2/ many 1/ few 0/none good times (N=163, d.f.=1)	None	69.81	65.53	3.10	.048
	Few	65.48	70.81		
	Many	66.06	74.24		
Immediately after the divorce I had conflicts with my custodial parent: often=1/ rarely=0 (N=156, d.f.=1)	Rarely	66.16	74.20	5.63	.019
	Often	69.00	67.25		
Immediately after the divorce my relationship with the custodial parent was: pretty good=1/ quite bad=0 (N=152, d.f.=1)	Quite bad	74.88	70.17	5.80	.017
	Pretty good	66.00	72.91		
Nature of the relationship individuals always had with the custodial parent positive=1/ quite bad=0 (N=152, d.f.=1)	Quite bad	70.72	64.84	9.05	.003
	Positive	66.00	74.77		
Conflicts with the custodial parent because of her/his possessiveness: yes=1/ no=0 (N=132, d.f.=1)	No	67.50	73.35	6.07	.015
	Yes	68.94	64.00		
Individual's relationship with the stepparent : pretty good=1/ quite bad= 0 (N=75, d.f.=1)	Quite bad	70.22	68.91	6.07	.015
	Pretty good	65.74	78.24		
At the beginning I visited my non custodial parent: very often=3/ quite often=2/ rarely=1/ almost never=0 (N=147, d.f= 1)	Almost never	65.00	70.41	4.43	.005
	Rarely	65.14	77.00		
	Quite often	71.38	68.88		
	Very often	64.06	77.15		
Frequency of individual's current contact (visiting him) with the non-custodial parent: very often=3/ quite often=2/ rarely=1/ almost never=0 (N=97, d.f.=1)	Almost never	65.62	71.87	3.77	.027
	Rarely	68.50	73.65		
	Quite often	68.72	68.75		
	Very often	64.58	81.29		
I was asked by my mother to behave in certain ways towards my father: yes=1/ no=0 (N=158, d.f.=1)	No	66.39	73.73	10.24	.002
	Yes	68.34	61.83		
I was asked to agree with my mother's account for the divorce: yes=1/ no=0 (N=144, d.f.=1)	No	66.39	72.86	5.72	.018
	Yes	70.08	65.20		
I was asked to approve of my mother's attitudes and decisions: yes=1/ no=0 (N=144, d.f.=1)	No	66.17	73.46	7.54	.007
	Yes	69.60	65.33		
I was asked to approve of my father's attitudes and decisions: yes=1/ no=0 (N=143, d.f.=1)	No	67.39	73.07	6.45	.012
	Yes	68.63	61.50		

Possible self concerning being ambitious in career

One of the possible selves which differentiated UK individuals from intact and divorced families concerned ambition in occupation. This possible self did not differentiate within the Greek sample.

Table 66 indicates that the residential family environment seems to play a central role in divorcees' offspring orientation to career in terms of ambition. The individuals' overall positive relationships with the custodial parent during the period since the divorce, are connected with



higher scores on the possible self regarding being ambitious.

Table 66: Analysis of variance of mean scores reported by English divorcees' offspring on possible selves regarding being ambitious in career.

English divorcees' offspring		Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Nature of individual's relationships with the custodial parent, immediately after the divorce (N=72, d.f.=1)	Quite bad	13.78	4.32	4.86	.031
	Pretty good	16.02	3.85		
Nature of individual's relationship with his/her custodial parent (N=65, d.f.=2)	Quite bad	12.58	4.62	3.92	.025
	Quite good	15.52	3.82		
	Very good	16.50	4.08		
Individual's trust in stepparent (N=35, d.f.=1)	No	13.14	4.83	9.53	.004
	Yes	17.23	3.03		
After the divorce, the non custodial parent had a live in partner (N=54, d.f.=1).	No	13.88	3.25	5.70	.021
	Yes	16.69	4.41		

Individuals who reported themselves trusting the stepparent scored higher than those who did not trust him/her. This finding is supported by the information emerging from the interviews where it was indicated that both males and females who experienced a very close relationship with the stepparent reported many positive possible selves regarding their future career. Positive relationships with the custodial parent and the stepparent may be related to divorcees' offspring self-esteem (Wallerstein, 1985; Wallerstein et. al., 1988) and the qualities of self they possess and develop through these experiences/relationships. Happy relationships with family members experienced by divorcees' offspring may function as points of reference and security. As such they provide offspring with the qualities they need in order to cope with potentially difficult and demanding situations which may presuppose emotional maturity and balance.

Those whose non-custodial parent had a live in partner scored higher on ambition than those who did not report such a situation. This was also the case for those who reported a happy-close relationship with the stepparent. All the findings presented above seem to support the literature regarding the importance of hierarchical authority relations in the family (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1984; Nock, 1988) which socialise and introduce children to hierarchically organised institutions e.g. school and occupational institutions. Earlier research has suggested that this experience is a pre-requisite for successful occupational life (Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

*Possible self concerning being open to socialising with colleagues*

Being open to socialising with colleagues differentiated UK participants from divorced and intact families and also Greek from English divorcees' offspring.

Table 67 indicates that UK divorcees' offspring who have a conflict free relationship with the custodial parent immediately after the divorce and a conflict free relationship with the non-custodial parent regarding their personal life scored higher on possible selves about relationships with colleagues than those who reported a conflict-ridden relationship. The beneficial role of a positive relationship between the offspring and the custodial (usually the mother) and non-custodial parent on offspring's representation of self concerning social life has already been discussed in the section about the possible selves concerning future friendships.

UK divorcees' offspring who reported the presence of step-siblings in the new family of the non-custodial parent also scored higher on possible selves regarding being open to socialising with colleagues than those who did not report such a situation. The presence of step-siblings in the life of divorcees' offspring may be related to rivalry and competition for the attention and love of the parent they share (Amato, 1987) or provide an opportunity for developing relationships which extend outside the immediate family.

*Table 67: Analysis of variance of mean scores reported by English divorcees' offspring on possible selves regarding being open to socialising with colleagues.*

English divorcees' offspring		Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Having conflicts with the custodial parent immediately after the divorce (N=70, d.f.=1)	Rarely	10.58	1.73	4.70	.034
	Often	9.55	1.93		
Conflicts with the non custodial parent regarding individual's personal life (N=51, d.f.= 1)	No	10.96	1.40	8.48	.005
	Yes	9.50	2.14		
Non custodial step-mother/father had children from her/his previous marriage (N=32, d.f.=1)	No	9.94	1.85	7.88	.009
	Yes	11.40	.82		

In differentiating between Greek and UK divorcees' offspring, being open to socialising with colleagues related to the individual's relationship with the non-custodial parent, his/her obligation to visit the non-custodial parent, the "after the divorce" marital status of the non-custodial parent, the conflicts s/he experienced with the custodial parent and marital conflicts

after the divorce. In the majority of circumstances the English participants scored higher than their Greek counterparts regardless of the nature of the event. Greek individuals scored higher than their UK counterparts on the possible self regarding being open to relationships with colleagues in circumstances where individuals perceived themselves as having no control over the situation i.e.

- their parents had conflicts immediately after the divorce
- they were obliged to formally visit the non-custodial parent

The largest difference in scores occurred when the individual was obliged to visit the non-custodial parent. Contact with the non-custodial parent against the offspring's wishes is perhaps a highly stressful event for Greek individuals and leads them to pursue relationships with people outside the family in an environment in which in Greek society does not conform to the social norm. This suggestion is supported by sociological studies that have shown that Greek females are more family and relationships than occupation oriented (Mousourou, 1989). Divorcees' offspring's duty to visit the non-custodial parent despite his/her wishes may be extremely stressful because of the feelings of desertion within a context of the strong bonds between family members (Oakley, 1982; Kataki, 1984, 1990; Georgas, 1990) in the Greek family and the negative value set by the Greek society on divorce.

*Table 68: Interaction effects of the analysis of variance of mean scores according to individuals' nationality X circumstances of parental divorce, on the possible selves regarding being open to relationships with colleagues.*

Possible selves regarding being open to relationships with colleagues					
Greek and English participants from divorced families		Greek Means	English Means	F	Sign. of F
Conflicts with the custodial parent for trivial things yes=1/ no=0 (n=132, d.f.=1)	No	8.65	10.80	5.71	.018
	Yes	9.37	9.85		
Non-custodial parent's remarriage after the divorce/ yes=1, no=0 (N=158, d.f.=1)	No	9.32	10.02	5.41	.021
	Yes	8.39	10.66		
Time of non-custodial parent's remarriage after the divorce/ in the first two years after the divorce=1/ after the first two years=2 (N=83, d.f.=1)	In the first two years	8.00	10.60	4.50	.031
	After the first two years	9.77	10.28		
The non-custodial parent spent time with the individual yes=1, no=0 (N=72, d.f.=1)	No	8.36	10.46	4.22	.044
	Yes	10.27	10.40		
Parental conflicts after the divorce: initially=0/ until now=1	For the first period	9.86	9.54	5.14	.026
	Until now	8.56	10.40		
Obligation to visit the non-custodial parent formally for some hours yes=1/ no=0 (N=80, d.f.=1)	No	9.83	9.54	9.50	.003
	Yes	11.07	7.60		

Regarding within nationality differences, Table 68 indicates that Greek individuals who scored high on the possible selves regarding being open to socialising with colleagues were the ones



who experienced positive situations during the parental divorce. English participants scored high on the possible self regarding relationships with colleagues when they experienced negative events. Greek individuals appeared to be oriented to a not necessarily friendly but demanding social environment when they felt confident of the divorce circumstances they had lived through. They experienced positive relationships with parents and a lack of parental conflicts but had mindful social interaction/exchanges when they experienced negative situations. In these circumstances they may perceive themselves as deviant in a certain social context (occupation). They may negotiate, manipulate, and change their social environments by being mindful (Frable et. al., 1990). For English individuals, the occupational environment seems to provide the reference group for when they experience negative life events since occupation is generally more important for UK individuals.

#### *Possible self concerning being keen on relationships with colleagues*

Being keen on relationships with colleagues differentiated UK individuals from divorced and intact families (Table 69) and also Greek from English divorcees' offspring (Table 71).

Since this possible self overlaps in content with the one concerning being open to relationships with colleagues, Tables 69 and 71 indicate similar circumstances of divorce and patterns of scores with those presented in Tables 67 and 68.

Apart from the conflicts between offspring and the non-custodial parent reported in Table 67, Table 69 indicates that high scores on the possible self regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues applies for UK individuals who reported a happy relationship with the non-custodial parent, continued contact with him/her and no conflicts regarding feelings of possessiveness by the non-custodial parents towards them.

A post-hoc Tukey test indicated that there was no difference in the possible selves regarding relationships with colleagues according to the frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent at the beginning of the post-divorce period (Table 69). This supports previous research indicating that it is not the frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent in the long-term that is related

to interpersonal problems reported by young adult divorcees' offspring (Bolgar et al, 1995). Other factors may affect individuals' relationships with people at work. Although the frequency of contact at the beginning of the post-divorce period does not have a particular effect on individuals' possible selves regarding relationships with colleagues, continued contact does appear to positively affect individual's possible self regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues.

*Table 69: Analysis of variance of mean scores reported by English divorcees' offspring on possible selves regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues.*

English divorcees' offspring		Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Having conflicts with the custodial parent immediately after the divorce (N=70, d.f.=1)	Rarely	22.50	3.73	5.17	.026
	Often	20.15	4.30		
Conflicts with the non-custodial parent regarding individual's personal life (N=51, d.f.= 1)	No	23.85	3.47	15.51	.000
	Yes	19.54	4.33		
Conflicts with the non-custodial parent regarding his possessiveness (N=49, d.f.= 1)	No	22.81	4.05	4.81	.033
	Yes	19.72	4.29		
Enjoyment of non-custodial parent's company (N=56, d.f.= 1)	No	19.58	4.27	5.79	.020
	Yes	22.63	3.79		
Continued contact with non-custodial parent (N=65, d.f.= 1)	No	19.25	3.59	6.41	.014
	Yes	22.30	3.80		
Individual's visits to non-custodial parent, at the beginning (N=64, d.f.=3)	Almost never	20.83	3.88	3.04	.035
	Rarely	23.07	3.42		
	Quite often	20.34	4.09		
	Often	23.76	3.78		
Non-custodial step-mother/father had children from her/his previous marriage (N=32, d.f.=1)	No	20.41	4.80	8.25	.007
	Yes	24.33	2.31		
Individual's memories of being present during parents' arguments (N=74, d.f.=3)	Almost never	23.69	2.81	2.97	.038
	Rarely	21.84	3.65		
	Quite often	22.41	3.58		
	Very often	19.77	4.74		

UK divorcee's offspring who reported themselves almost never present during parental conflict scored higher on being keen on socialising with colleagues than those who described themselves very often present. This finding lends support to previous research focusing on parental conflicts in association with child's disturbance indicating that children are more likely to be depressed, withdrawn and uncommunicative where parents have open arguments (Johnston et al., 1987). The importance of the relationship between parents for young adults is also supported by Bolgar et al (1995) who indicated that the quality of the relationship between the biological parents appeared more important to young adults regarding the interparental problems they reported than the level of contact with the non-custodial parent.

The interaction effects between divorcees' offspring's nationality (Greek-English) and the nature of the events experienced by divorcees' offspring (Table 71), indicate a group of events, including those presented in Table 68, which affect the possible self regarding being open to socialising with colleagues.

The circumstances of parental divorce which differentiate Greek from English divorcees' offspring are related to relationships between parents and children, individuals' conflicts with the custodial parent, contact with the non-custodial parent, obligation to visit the non-custodial parent, being asked by each parent to behave in certain ways towards the other parent and non-custodial parents' remarriage after the divorce (Table 71). The central role of the step-parent in offspring's possible selves regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues is indicated in that it is the only significant main effect relating to the nature of the divorce circumstances. Table 70 indicates that individuals whose custodial parent remarried after the divorce scored lower on possible selves regarding relationships with colleagues at work than those whose custodial parent did not remarry. Divorcees' offspring may experience the remarriage of the custodial parent as an unhappy situation or even a further case of being let down which make them cautious, in their relationships with colleagues. This may be related to the nature of the occupational environment where one's capacity to deal with others' feelings is of the first importance and the interplay of needs to like and be liked, giving pleasure, appreciation and acceptance are all important (Parsons and Bales, 1955).

*Table 70: Divorce circumstances differentiating participants' possible selves relating to being keen on relationships with colleagues according to the nature of these circumstances.*

Greek and English participants from divorced families	Yes Means	S.D	No Means	S.D.	F	Sign. of F
Custodial parent's remarriage after the divorce (N=147, d.f=3)	20.62	4.57	22.55	3.95	4.79	.030

Table 71 indicates that nationality is a mediating factor for divorcees' offspring's representations of selves regarding being keen on relationships with colleagues. Similar to the pattern of scores presented in Table 68, Table 71 indicates that in the majority of divorce circumstances, English individuals are keener on relationships with colleagues than their Greek counterparts irrespective of the nature of the situations they experienced. In fact overall the UK sample is more oriented to relationships at work than the Greek sample.



The only circumstances of the divorce where Greek individuals scored higher than their English counterparts on possible selves regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues at work concern negative events over which *the individuals had no control* (however the difference in scores was either small or marginal):

- they were asked by each parent (both the mother and father) to behave in certain ways towards the other.

*Table 71: Interaction effects of the analysis of variance of mean scores according to individuals' nationality X circumstances of parental divorce, on the possible selves regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues.*

Possible selves regarding being keen on further socialising with colleagues					
Greek and English participants from divorced families		Greek Means	English Means	F	Sign. of F
Individuals' conflicts with the custodial parent regarding relationships with partner: yes=1/ no=0	No	19.72	21.09	4.45	.037
	Yes	18.25	23.11		
Non-custodial parent's remarriage after the divorce/ yes=1, no=0 (N=158, d.f.=1)	No	19.81	21.29	5.41	.021
	Yes	18.42	22.81		
At the beginning I visited my non custodial parent: very often=3/ quite often=2/ rarely=1/ almost never=0 (N=147, d.f= 3)	Almost never	19.85	20.83	2.77	.044
	Rarely	18.38	23.07		
	Quite often	19.84	20.34		
	Very often	19.40	23.76		
I was asked by my mother to behave in certain ways towards my father: yes=1/ no=0 (N=158, d.f.=1)	No	19.25	22.25	4.01	.047
	Yes	19.53	19.41		
I was asked by father to behave in certain ways towards my mother : yes=1/ no=0 (N=141, d.f.=1)	No	18.84	22.02	5.15	.025
	Yes	20.58	19.25		
Obligation to visit the non-custodial parent formally for some hours yes=1/ no=0 (N=80, d.f.=1)	No	19.57	21.50	4.01	.049
	Yes	17.30	23.23		

Regarding within nationality differences, Table 71 illustrates a similar pattern of scores and suggestions to that reported in the previous section concerning the possible self about being open to socialising with colleagues (Table 68). Greek individuals who scored high on the possible self regarding being keen on socialising with colleagues were the ones who experienced positive situations during the parental divorce. Regarding the English participants, those who scored the highest on the possible selves regarding relationships with colleagues were those who experienced negative circumstances during parental divorce.

## Summary

To summarise, the majority of the divorce circumstances which affect the possible selves reported by Greek and UK participants relating to being undemanding with friends concern the child's relationship with the non-custodial parent and individual's presence during parental arguments. In the UK sample, the possible self regarding being undemanding with friends is also affected by the individual's relationship with the custodial parent. The pattern of scores indicates a beneficial effect of a lack of parental conflict and individual's positive relationship with the non-custodial parent on the possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding being undemanding with people.

The possible self concerning being keen on developing friendships is affected by the Greek individual's relationship with the step-parent, non-custodial parent and non-custodial parent's remarriage. In the Greek sample, in relation to possible selves concerning future friendships, the majority of the questions significantly differentiating Greek divorcees' offspring concern the non-custodial parent. This is possibly related to the value set by Greek society on the family institution per se, as a nest and source of psychosocial support for its members (Mousourou, 1989, p. 22, 23) and the acute feelings of rejection perhaps then experienced by the children in divorce situations.

Regarding being ambitious in career, a possible self differentiating only between UK individuals, divorcees' offspring who reported a positive relationship with the custodial parent, trust in the stepparent and the presence of a partner in the life of the non-custodial parent after the divorce scored higher than those who reported the opposite situation. These relationships may relate to the hierarchical authority relationships learned in the family as corner stones for the future occupational life.

For the UK sample, the possible self concerning being keen on socialising with colleagues, is mainly affected by the individual's relationship with the non-custodial parent, the presence of step-siblings in the new family of the non-custodial parent, conflicts with the custodial parent immediately after the divorce and the individual's presence during parental conflicts.

The possible self concerning being open to socialising with colleagues at work, reported by the UK sample is affected by some of the circumstances of divorce which also influence the possible self concerning being keen on relationships with colleagues. The pattern of scores indicates the beneficial effect of a positive, conflict free relationship with the custodial and non-custodial parents for divorcees' offspring's possible self concerning being open to socialising with colleagues.

To summarise, the pattern of scores for the Greek and UK sample; those who experienced positive divorce circumstances scored higher on possible selves regarding future friendships, relationships with colleagues and ambition than those who reported negative experiences although there were some exceptions. These are outlined below:

- where the non-custodial parent got married in the first two years after the divorce. This affected the possible self concerning being keen on developing friendships (Greek sample)
- where after the divorce the non-custodial parent had a live in partner. This affected the possible self concerning being undemanding with friends (English sample)
- the presence of step-children following the non-custodial parent's relationship with a new partner. This affected the possible selves concerning being open and keen on socialising with colleagues (English sample)

Those who reported the above experiences scored high on relationships with people, either friends or colleagues. These situations have been perceived as negative according to earlier literature (Amato, 1988; Amato and Keith, 1991; Shook and Jurich, 1992). They are out of the individual's control as they concern the non-custodial parent's personal life. Assuming that respondents have almost no control over these situations, socialising with people, either friends or colleagues may be a way of coping and provide a substitute for the lack of family bonds. However, this raises the question regarding the extent of divorcees' offspring's involvement in these relationships. The mediating factor is perhaps the individuals' cognitive appraisal of the situation.

For the possible selves concerning being positive towards future friendships and being prepared to be committed to friendships, Greek individuals scored higher in perceiving themselves



committed and positive towards friends when they experience negative rather than positive circumstances of parental divorce. Concerning being positive towards future friendships; unhappy pre-divorce family life, conflict and a poor relationship with the custodial parent and the step-parent, the individual's contact with the non-custodial parent, being asked by parents to agree to their account of their divorce and being involved in hostile alliances against each parent all make a contribution. These circumstances of parental divorce, apart from the pre-divorce family life, affect the possible self concerning being prepared to be committed to friends reported by Greek and UK divorcees' offspring. The importance of offspring's involvement in parental divorce is indicated in the main effect of the divorce circumstances differentiating divorcees' offspring. This affects divorcees' offspring regardless of their nationality.

The divorce circumstances differentiating Greek from UK divorcees' offspring according to their scores on the possible selves concerning being keen on socialising with colleagues relate to the individual's conflicts with the custodial parent regarding the custodial parent's relationship with his/her partner, the non-custodial parent's remarriage after the divorce, contact with him/her during the period immediately after the divorce, being asked by each parent to behave in certain ways towards the other and being under an obligation to visit the non-custodial parent despite his/her wish. Overall, divorcees' offspring's involvement in hostile alliances with one parent against the other mostly affect close relationships with people, either friends and colleagues. This is reported by Greek and UK divorcees' offspring.

Summarising, the patterns of scores on possible selves regarding relationships with friends and colleagues differentiating Greek from UK divorcees' offspring, indicate a mediating social factor. English divorcees' offspring scored higher on the representation of selves regarding friendships when they experience positive circumstances of parental divorce (the ones mentioned above) while the Greek divorcees' offspring scored higher than their English counterparts in cases where they have had negative experiences.

In the possible selves regarding relationships with colleagues, English individuals scored higher than their Greek counterparts irrespective of the nature of the experience of parental divorce. This was the case for the majority of the circumstances of parental divorce apart from those over

which they had no control e.g. when they were asked to visit the non-custodial parent against their wishes. The overall pattern of scores indicates the role of mediating social factors.

Mediating societal factors seem to be operating in the way possible selves towards relationships with friends and colleagues evolve in different nationalities. The rate of divorce in each country is perhaps related to whether stigma is attached to divorcees or not. Given the social factors dominating English society, which is an individualistic, highly industrialised and urbanised society, alternative sources of support to family are available in the form of social acceptance, work and financially through social security (Burns, 1995). This may explain why English divorcees' offspring are keener on relationship with colleagues when they experience negative rather than positive circumstances of parental divorce. With friends they are keener on close relationships when they experience positive rather than negative circumstances in the parental divorce. Overall, relationships may come to be perceived as unreliable, marriages do not last for ever and the occupational environment appears to be more appropriate to develop self-reliance. In contrast in Greek society, which is still family and relationship oriented rather than occupation oriented and where "our people" are major sources of support, Greek individuals report high positive representations of selves regarding future friendships when they experience a negative situation of parental divorce, while in relationships with colleagues they are more cautious in contact with them as compared with their English counterparts.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVORCE SCENARIOS**

Open ended questions were included in the questionnaire so that information regarding parental divorce, which it was not possible to explore in the closed questions, could be identified and possible links between the circumstances of the divorce and possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring could be considered. Statistical analysis could not be applied to the data since individuals gave more than one answer to the majority of open-ended questions. The situations they experienced were varied and not necessarily related to each other. Consequently,

- any attempt to statistically analyse the answers reported by the participants to the open-ended questions was prevented since each individual was coded under more than one category/variable. Categories could not be compared to each other given that individual responses overlapped.
- while similar answers could be grouped statistical analysis was ruled out for the reasons described above.

Similar answers were grouped into broad categories to enable descriptive analysis. Initially, a qualitative coding of questions took place, as described in the methodology for the interviews (Cooper and McIntyre, 1993). Factual information was coded in detail. As a second step, the information was gradually condensed by grouping categories sharing a key dimension in common.

The tables following indicate the frequency of answers reported by the participants under each category. The percentage of individuals whose responses fell into each category was calculated in terms of the overall number of participants under each sub-sample (English=79, Greek=90). The research focuses on those answers that tended to differentiate the two groups (English and Greek participants).

The findings are reported only where there are sizeable differences between Greek and UK respondents (the percentage of participants making particular responses for the rest of the open-ended questions are presented in Appendix E). The categories outlined below are those reported by more than ten per cent of participants. It was not possible to carry out chi-squared analysis



because of the small percentages of responses falling within the categories.

Table 72: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding themselves being at their adolescent when their relationship with the custodial parent deteriorated.

My relationships with the parent I was living with became bad during:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Adolescence	15 (19%)	10 (11.1%)

Table 73: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the period of life when their relationship with the custodial parent became better.

My relationship with the parent I was living with became better:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
After the teenage years	11 (13.9%)	6 (6.7%)
When I left home(studies or life on her/his own)	12 (15.2%)	19 (11.1%)
It is still improving	14 (17.7%)	14 (27.8%)

More English than Greek individuals reported adolescence as the age of major disturbance in their relationship with the custodial parent (Table 72). This may be particularly related to issues of discipline (Carson et al, 1987). More English than Greek participants also reported that the post-adolescent period was a time when the child-custodial parent relationship improved (Table 73). Perhaps as they get older divorcees' adult offspring empathise with their mother, usually the custodial parent (Gately and Schwebel, 1992) and identify with her pain of adjustment to divorce (Weiss, 1988).

Table 74: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the period of their lives when their relationship with the non-custodial parent deteriorated.

My relationship with my non-custodial parent deteriorated	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
During my adult years	17 (21.5%)	7 (7.8%)
When the separation happened	10 (12.7%)	12 (13.3%)
Continues to worsen	8 (10.1%)	15 (16.7%)

Table 75: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the fact that their relationships with the non-custodial parent is still improving.

My relationship with my non-custodial parent became better:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
It is still improving	7 (8.9%)	20 (22.2%)

Regarding the offspring's relationship with the custodial parent (Table 73), more Greek than English participants reported that their relationship with the custodial parent was still improving. For the Greek participants, the relationship with the non-custodial parent was often still changing either positively or negatively (Tables, 74 and 75). These continuing relationships suggest that perhaps, it is more difficult for Greek than English participants to detach themselves from the parent who has left (usually the father). If this is the case, Greek divorcees' adult offspring may enter into their own marital life with a continuing psychological burden regarding parental family life and divorce. Continued attempts at reconciliation with custodial and non-custodial parent may keep alive facets of the parental divorce. However, Greek individuals' persistence in attempting to improve their relationship with their parents may indicate the value they set on family life. Close relationships between family members could be perceived as a characteristic of the Greek family where elements of the traditional and the nuclear family life often coexist (e.g. close bonds between children and parents. Several generations in many cases live in the same household) (Doumani, 1989; Mousourou, 1987, 1990; Maratou, 1990; Kataki, 1990).

*Table 76: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding contact with both parents.*

What <u>pattern of life</u> did you have <u>after the divorce</u> :	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
I lived away but I met them quite often	13    (16.5%)	6    (6.7%)

More English than Greek participants reported that their relationship with the non-custodial parent deteriorated in adulthood (Table 74). Perhaps, even where the child/non-custodial parent relationship appears to be good there are long-term detrimental effects. This is supported by the findings of previous studies which indicate that adult divorcees' offspring were more 'tough minded' and more distant to 'family' and to 'father' compared with members from intact families (Weiss, 1988). The deteriorating child-parent relationship during adulthood may be explained by the findings of the Exeter study (1994) which suggest that children are aware of the non-custodial parent's lack of interest in them. The findings of this study hint that such a situation and the accompanying feelings of divorcees' offspring may be expressed in adulthood when they may possess sufficient coping strategies. More English than Greek participants reported keeping in contact with the non-custodial parent, although they lived apart (Table 76). The individuals' contact with the non-custodial parent might be perceived as a positive event in their lives. The

majority of Greek divorcees' offspring lacked this. The positive effect of contact is supported by the literature which indicates that contact can provide children with the reassurance that the non-custodial parent still cares for his offspring as well as strengthening the relationship between the non-custodial parent and the child (White et al., 1985; Shook and Jurich, 1992).

Summarising the information regarding divorcees' offspring's relationships with both parents, it seems that Greek individuals are more deeply involved with their parents than their English counterparts since they report themselves still involved in fluctuating relationships. This may also be understood through the lens of the social representation of divorce as a social stigma related to the rate of divorce in society. Since the rate of divorce in Greece is much lower than that in the UK, divorce is more likely to be perceived as 'shameful' (Frude, 1993; Giddens, 1993) by Greek than English participants. This may make them more anxious to maintain relationships given their experience of the consequences of the divorce and the lack of previous secure attachments combined with the losses of significant others.

*Table 77: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the financial status of the custodial parent after the divorce.*

The parent I lived with after the divorce:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Was working all the time	18 (22.8%)	22 (24.4%)
Started working after the divorce	6 (7.6%)	25 (27.8)

*Table 78: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the sources of financial support of the mother after the divorce.*

The custodial parent (mother) had financial support from:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Her relatives	3 (3.8%)	20 (22.2%)
Non-custodial parent	11 (13.9%)	4 (4.4%)

*Table 79: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the problems they encountered due to financial difficulties they encountered after the parental divorce.*

Financial difficulties created:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Everyday problems e.g. clothing, moving out of the house etc.	9 (11.4%)	11 (12.2%)
Negative feelings in the mother	23 (29.1%)	23 (23.3%)
Difficulties in the way I had to organise my life	14 (17.7%)	22 (24.4)



Regarding the post divorce financial status of the family (mother-children) Table 77 indicates that the majority of Greek mothers started working after the divorce. This is possibly connected with the greater financial difficulties faced by Greek participants compared to that reported by their English counterparts (Table 79). The majority of Greek participants reported difficulties in the post-divorce period because of financial problems. This supports previous research indicating economic decline following divorce (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988; Peterson and Zill, 1986). Recent studies in Greece of single-parent families indicate the considerable financial problems which divorced mothers face and the lack of provision from state institutions (Kongidou, 1996). Relatives financially support divorced (usually unemployed) Greek mothers (Table 78). Also, more Greek than English individuals reported the supportive role of grandparents and siblings.

*Table 80: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the people who supported them financially after the parental divorce.*

I had financial support from:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Mother	9 (11.4%)	22 (24.4%)
Father	13 (16.5%)	21 (11.1%)
Both parents	8 (10.1%)	15 (16.7%)
Grandparents and siblings	6 (7.6%)	18 (20%)
None	12 (15.2%)	8 (8.9%)

The majority of English individuals reported that they did not have financial support from any of the members of the extended family (Table 80). This was not the case for the Greek sample. This is possibly an indication of the crucial role played by the extended family in Greek society, especially the grandparents, who appear in part to substitute for the welfare state (Kataki, 1984, 1990; Mousourou, 1989; Kongidou, 1996). The majority of the Greek participants reported emotional support from their grandparents more than from any other 'significant others'. This was not the case for the English sample (Table 81). More Greek than English individuals reported the custodial parent (usually the mother) and grandparents as the main sources of support. The crucial role of grandparents in the Greek family is apparent.

*Table 81: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the family members who supported them in coping with parental divorce.*

I had support from family members:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Custodial parent	35 (44.3%)	45 (50%)
Grandparents	25 (31.6%)	46 (51.1%)
Non-custodial parent	13 (16.5%)	16 (17.8%)
Siblings	29 (36.7%)	27 (30%)
<b><i>combined information:</i></b>		
Custodial parent and grandparents (1,5)	12 (15%)	28 (31%)
Custodial parent and siblings(1,6)	14 (18%)	14 (16%)
Custodial parent and non-custodial parent(1,3)	13 (16%)	15 (17%)

The role of the extended Greek family in the life of Greek participants is also indicated in Table 82, where more Greek than English individuals reported support from relatives who although they did not belong to the divorced family, played a significant part in participants' lives. This supports findings from recent socio-psychological studies regarding the values and characteristics of the modern Greek family, where close bonds between relatives and family members are still apparent although the family type is a nuclear one (Maratou, 1990; Haritos-Fatouros and Hatzigeleki, 1997). This is not the case in English society which passed through the stage of industrialisation and urbanisation related to an individualistic way of living almost a century ago (Van de Kaa, 1977). The majority of English individuals reported financial support from their non-custodial parents which related to the legal arrangements following the divorce. This could be characterised as a positive situation since the literature indicates that none of the systems of support is as salient as a continued involvement of the father with the child (Santrock et al., 1982). This was not the case for the Greek individuals. It was not the father but the mother who seemed to take responsibility for financial issues concerning children's upbringing, in Greek society. This reveals the significant role played by mothers in the Greek family and society. The majority of Greek mothers started working after the divorce having both financial and parenting responsibilities (Mousourou, 1984, 1989; Kongidou, 1996). Greek research indicates that mothers are the main care-takers of children and their employment in the majority of cases relates to the need to increase family income rather than their need to be independent and gain personal satisfaction (Mousourou, 1989). The literature indicates that the custodial parent who has to work after the divorce is constrained in the amount of time and energy available to devote to their

children. This implies a decrease in parental attention, help and supervision (Brandwein et al., 1974; Amato and Keith, 1991). However, more Greek than English individuals reported themselves getting financial support from both their parents (Table 80). This indicates Greek parents' high concern for the financial support they should provide to their children (both the custodial and non custodial parent). The close long-term bonds between parents and children may be related to the nature of the Greek family as an amalgam of traditional and modern values which have developed due to the rapid urbanisation of the Greek population (Maratou, 1990; Mousourou, 1990).

More English than Greek participants reported that they did not have the chance to talk about their parent's divorce with anyone (Table 83) while more Greek than English individuals indicated that they had the chance to talk about the parental divorce with friends. In the English sample, combinations of sources of support were reported: the custodial parent (mother), grandparents, siblings and the non-custodial parent. The custodial parent is clearly a major source of support for both English individuals and Greek participants. However, for the Greeks grandparents complemented the crucial role of the custodial parent as an important source of support. The role of the grandparents is indicated in the literature (Hetherington, 1982). The important role of support systems is reported in the majority of the studies related to effects of divorce on children (Hetherington et al, 1982; Santrock et al, 1982; Cockett and Tripp, 1994). Summarising, Greek divorcees' offspring reported more support than their English counterparts particularly from the extended family.

*Table 82: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the persons outside the immediate family who supported them to cope with parental divorce.*

I had support from people outside the family:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Relatives e.g. cousins, aunts etc	9 (11.4%)	16 (17.8%)
Family friends	22 (27.8%)	27 (30%)
Personal friends	34 (43%)	45 (50%)



Table 83: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the persons with whom they had the chance to talk about the parental divorce.

I had the chance to <u>talk my parent's divorce through</u> with	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
My mother	9 (11.4%)	12 (13.3%)
Both my parents	13 (16.5%)	11 (2.2%)
Personal friends/partners	10 (12.7%)	17 (18.9%)
None	12 (15.2)	8 (8.9)

Concerning the extent to which individuals experienced parental conflicts before the divorce, the responses (Table 84) indicated that Greek participants experienced pre-divorce parental conflicts to a greater extent than English participants. The majority of English individuals reported that they did not realise that anything was wrong in their parents' relationships. Divorce suddenly arose in their lives (Table 84). This may imply a pre-divorce family environment free of conflicts for English participants, which may indicate less family stress (in terms of an overall charged atmosphere) compared to that experienced by Greek individuals. Fewer conflicts between parents before and after the divorce, are associated in the relevant literature with less interpersonal problems between adult divorcees' offspring (Booth et al., 1984; Franklin et al., 1990; Gabardi and Rosen, 1992). Greek individuals indicated that they experienced more parental conflicts than their English counterparts. This could be related to the social value set on the family and consequently the pressure not to be party to the dissolution of it. This may keep parents together for a long time living in an unhappy conflict ridden marital relationship. Divorce is perceived as a 'shameful' and 'stigmatised' event (Frude, 1993; Giddens, 1993) and may keep disfunctioning families intact.

Table 84: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the way the parental divorce was raised at their lives.

How was the question of <u>divorce raised in your life</u> :	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
It was just announced to me	18 (22.8%)	19 (21.1%)
I realised that because of their conflicts	6 (7.6%)	21 (23.3%)
Suddenly	13 (16.5%)	8 (8.9%)
I was too young to realise what was going on	18 (22.8%)	24 (26.7%)

Regarding the reasons for conflicts between parents during the period after the divorce, Table 85 indicates that more English than Greek participants reported themselves unaware of the nature

of their parents' personal relationship (e.g. partnerships outside the marriage, drinking, gambling etc). In addition, more English than Greek participants reported that conflicts between their parents after the divorce related to personal issues, while more Greek than English individuals reported that their parents quarrelled after the divorce for a variety of reasons; they described their parents' incompatibility, and that almost everything caused conflicts between them. Summarising, what differentiates the Greek from the English participants is that English divorcees' offspring do not seem to be deeply involved in the parental divorce either in terms of pre-divorce parental conflict or in terms of being aware of the reasons for marital conflict between parents.

*Table 85: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the reasons for parental conflict after the divorce.*

The <u>causes of conflict</u> after the divorce were:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Issues' surrounding the children	14 (17.7%)	14 (15.6%)
Financial reasons (arrangements about property and maintenance issues)	24 (30.4%)	24 (26.7%)
Incompatibility (they could not get on, they had arguments about everything, even trivial things)	6 (7.6%)	15 (16.7%)
Couple-personal issues (partners, style of life)	14 (17.7%)	6 (6.7%)

The reasons given for parental divorce (Table 86) that differentiate English from Greek participants, suggest that more English than Greek individuals divorce on the basis of adultery, factors out of the parents' control (e.g. financial problems, immaturity) and the father's particular habits/patterns of life (e.g. drinking, gambling). These are specific reasons given for parental divorce rather than incompatibility which was the most common reason given by the Greek participants. In the case of the English participants, the specific reasons given for divorce indicate situations that can be clearly identified by divorcees' offspring. As such, in their future lives divorcees' offspring can try to avoid such situations or attempt to resolve them before they 'destroy' their own marriage/future family life.

Table 86: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the reasons for parental divorce.

The reasons given for divorce were:	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
Adultery	32 (40.5%)	19 (21.1%)
Incompatibility	27 (34.2%)	43 (47.8%)
External factors (relatives, psychological/mental health, they grew apart for some reason, financial problems, culture, age gap)	24 (30.4%)	16 (17.8%)
Father's behaviour (his lack of interest in family issues/ members, gambling, violent behaviour, jealousy, oppressive behaviour towards the mother)	21 (26.6%)	16 (17.8%)

Table 87 indicates that more English than Greek participants had little information about the divorce either because they did not want to know about it or because of their parents' unwillingness to discuss it. English individuals tended not to get involved in personal parental issues. This may indicate either a lack of interest in maintaining the original family or a way of coping with the stress emerging from the divorce situation. Such denial may protect them from stress following the parental divorce. However, the literature (Cockett and Tripp, 1994) indicates that children having less information about parental divorce, feel confused and bewildered and often hope for reconciliation for far longer than their parents imagined (Cockett and Tripp, 1994; Mitchel, 1985; Hetherington, 1985).

Table 87: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the reasons why they knew little about the parental divorce.

In general I have been told very few about the divorce	English(N=79)	Greek (N=90)
I had lots of information about the divorce	8 (10.1%)	12 (13.3%)
I did not want to discuss the divorce	25 (31.6%)	15 (16.7%)
My parents avoided discussing the divorce	29 (36.7%)	21 (23.3%)

Table 88 indicates the priorities set by participants from divorced and intact families. Both Greek and English individuals from divorced and intact families reported a representation of self regarding being at peace with themselves as the main one in their lives. This was the highest priority for Greek and English individuals from divorced and intact families. The second most common priority expressed by all groups was family because of the emotional satisfaction it provides to individuals. The combination of career and family as supplementary aspects of life were reported as a third most common priority for all the groups with the exception of the English divorcees' offspring. The positive attitudes towards both family and occupation reported



by participants regardless of their family circumstances is supported by Buchanan and Brinke (1997) who found that both men and women regardless of their parenting background wanted both a working life and a family life. The third most common priority for UK divorcees' offspring, also the fourth priority for English and Greek individuals from intact families appears to be the family as a network of permanent relationships. Since divorce is commonplace in the UK, individuals are perhaps aware of the beneficial role of the family for their lives, given the loss they have experienced. The least important priority was occupational/career life, for all the subsamples but the Greek divorcees' offspring. For some Greek divorcees' offspring, the experiences of the divorce and the loss of parents, the consequences of which have kept them involved in an unhappy situation for long time, possibly makes them most oriented to occupational life. Such a suggestion partially supports the findings of Buchanan and Brinke (1997) who found that English women raised by a lone parent (included divorced families) were more work oriented. It would be interesting to identify whether these participants also reported still unsettled relationships with their parents and also to establish their age when they experienced parental divorce.

*Table 88: Percentage of Greek and English individuals from divorced and intact families according to the preferences they reported in their lives.*

	Greek intact (N=87)	Greek divorced (N=112)	English intact (N=60)	English divorced (N=92)
Combination of preference for occupation and family	10 (11.4%)	20 (17.8%)	8 (13.3%)	9 (9.7%)
Preference for career: avoid family dependent relationships	5 (5.7%)	11 (9.8%)	3 (5%)	5 (5.4%)
Preference for family: permanent relationships	6 (6.8%)	6 (5.3%)	7 (11.6%)	14 (15.2%)
Preference for family: emotions/ close relationships	22 (25.2%)	26 (23.2%)	17 (28.3%)	24 (26 %)
The first priority is to be at peace with myself	44 (50.5%)	49 (43.7%)	25 (41.6%)	40 (43%)

*Contribution of the open-ended questions to the findings of the quantitative analysis. Interpreting the possible selves which differentiate Greek and English individuals from divorced families.*

The information emerging from the open-ended questions enabled further understanding of the possible selves which differentiate Greek from English divorcees' offspring. Table 33 (in a

previous section) indicates that the mean scores reported by Greek divorcees' offspring on the possible selves regarding relationships with people, are lower than those reported by their English counterparts. Examining the qualitative data casts light on these differences.

Greek individuals seem to be more involved in the process of parental divorce over a longer period of time compared to their English counterparts. More Greek than English individuals reported that their relationship with the custodial and non-custodial parent was still unsettled; either improving or deteriorating. Parents (and especially the non-custodial parent) seem to continue to play an important role in Greek divorcees' offspring's lives as significant others.

Greek individuals reported that the financial difficulties they experienced also created difficulties in their personal life. This combined with the fact that the custodial parent often started working after the divorce, implying that she (mother, custodial parent) would be less available to them, makes the immediate situation more difficult for divorcees' offspring.

More Greek than English participants reported that they experienced parental conflict. This indicates that Greek divorcees' offspring are more likely than their English counterparts to start their own marital life with a psychological burden, the residue of their parents personal relationships.

The reason for parental divorce and post-divorce parental conflicts reported by the majority of Greek individuals related to the fact that parental personalities clashed and they were incompatible. According to the literature (Weiss, 1988) such friction may lead to a perception that marriage does not last for ever since it is almost impossible for two persons to be compatible in the long-term.

Taking this information into account and looking at the mean scores reported by Greek and English individuals regarding representations of selves in relationships with colleagues and friends, the main characteristics of divorce reported by Greeks are:

- constant involvement with and long-lasting interest in his/her relationships with his/her parents
- financial difficulties encountered,

- the experience of parental conflicts
- the attribution of parental separation and conflicts to parents' incompatibility relating to an overall unhappy miserable marital relationship

These may negatively affect the possible selves that differentiate Greek from English divorcees' offspring relating to relationships with colleagues, and friendships. These experiences appear to have a negative effect on individuals' representations of selves regarding relationships they develop with people, either friends or colleagues. This seems to occur even though the Greeks reported receiving more support than the English individuals.

Summarising, it seems that the scenario of parental divorce as described above consists of a network of negative events and situations which in turn have a negative influence on the representations of selves reported by Greek individuals regarding relationships with people. This supports previous findings regarding divorcees' American female offspring being more solitary within personal relationships (Weiss, 1975), having less friends, spending less time with friends and participating in fewer shared activities (Santrock, 1975). Weiss suggests that their greater orientation to self than relationships is due to their experience of parental divorce and their perception that there is always a potential for primary relationships to be severed by choice. Contradictory findings regarding divorcees' offspring having more contact with friends than those from intact families as an alternative to family life (Demo and Acock, 1988; McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988), could possibly be interpreted in the context of the broader social context in which the event takes place, i.e. the society where the study is carried out and the social meaning of divorce in that society. Greek society sets a high value on the family, has few alternatives to family, a low rate of divorce, and a well-organised welfare state is lacking (Kongidou, 1996). These factors seem to reduce the Greek individuals' orientation to people outside the family. This may also be mediated by their representation of self as stigmatised by the divorce. These factors do not pertain to English individuals. More marriages end in divorce in the UK, therefore the role of 'divorce' and the process of becoming divorced are seen as less aberrant and 'shameful' (Giddens, 1993; Frude, 1993). This may influence individuals' readiness to communicate their feelings to people outside the family. Greek individuals' lesser orientation to friends than their English counterparts may also be related to their cognition that since



relationships can be severed by choice, they should be cautious towards people. Such a cognition is related to the literature regarding deviants' mindful attitude towards people as a coping strategy, especially in their initial contacts (Frable et al., 1990). It seems that divorcees' orientation to people outside the family as a behaviour related to parental divorce, is mediated by social representations of family and divorce, the particular social environment where the individual lives. Greek individuals have more sources of support in the extended family than their English counterparts. They are also more cautious in making friends and relationships with colleagues than their English counterparts. It may be that despite the support provided to divorcees and their offspring by relatives and acquaintances what seems to matter for them is the social attitude towards the divorce and their identity as divorcees' offspring in a society where divorce is stigmatising. Social representations of divorce may affect divorcees' offspring's representations of selves regarding relationships with people, either friends or colleagues because of these factors. Consequently, the positive influence of available sources of support is counterbalanced by the social representations regarding divorce. The structure of Greek family life where elements of both the traditional and new (nuclear) type of family coexist, should also be taken into account (Haritos-Fatouros and Hatzigeleki, 1997) in order to understand the important role of family life in a modern industrialised society where the present style of life is dominated by traditional structures and values.

Developing a profile of parental divorce for English individuals on the basis of the information emerging from the open ended questions, the divorce scenario included:

- specific causes of parental divorce (personal issues, adultery)
- specific ages when the individual's relationship with the custodial and non-custodial parent improved or became worse (not having to re-establish these relationships)
- a distancing from the divorce (s/he did not want to discuss it, talk about it or ask for support, s/he lived away from parents but s/he kept contact)
- not directly experiencing continuous parental conflict (the divorce came quickly)
- financial support from a specific legally defined person: usually the non-custodial parent (father)

It may be that the above divorce scenario is less painful than the one reported by Greek

participants because the individuals' concerns regarding relationships with parents relate to a specific period and not throughout their life. The majority of English individuals did not experience parental conflict and they distanced themselves from the divorce. Financial problems were resolved legally. Hence, they avoided involvement in interpersonal arrangement with parents or other persons to get financial support, which could be a source of stress. Specific reasons were reported (personal parental issues) which led parents to get divorced, rather than an overall failure to get along, expressed as parents' incompatibility or clashing personalities which might indicate continuous marital unhappiness. The English participants might therefore emerge less scathed than their Greek counterparts. The relative frequency of divorce may also serve to make it more commonplace and hence less stressful. This should eliminate the individuals' feeling and cognitions of themselves as stigmatised by the divorce (Giddens, 1993).

For Greek individuals, the reasons given for separation and post separation conflict may indicate that the central architectural structure of their representation of family has collapsed and with it the more general belief that marriage is for ever (Wallerstein, 1984, 1987), since their parents divorce was an unsuccessful long-lasting attempt of two people to share their lives. The role of social policy may play a crucial part in the financial situation after the divorce, influencing Greek divorcees' offspring's personal life (Kongidou, 1996). The social value set on family and the role of parental figures in Greek society might 'force' Greek individuals to keep themselves involved in their parents' divorce for a long time, consistently trying to improve their relationships with parents, (at least up to the time, in their thirties, when the study was carried out). Parental divorce seems to be difficult for them to accept and live through in a society which emphasises the role of the family and consequently, the loss of it. The insufficient state provision for people who live through such a situation and the limited flexibility of Greek society to offer alternatives to family (Kongidou, 1996) may make the situation even worse.

## **CHAPTER 13**

### **DISCUSSION**

The study set out to explore the possible selves of young adults from divorced and intact families in two cultures differentiated by the rate of divorce and the role of the family within the culture.

What can the findings tell us?

The study seems to further our understanding of the role of possible selves concerning links between the self, culture and parental divorce. The scores on representations of selves reported by UK and Greek divorcees' offspring resemble the patterns of scores on representations of selves from individuals within each culture irrespective of whether their parents have been divorced. This suggests that the possible selves which guide the future action of divorcees' offspring from different nationalities regarding relationships with people, are not especially influenced by the experience of parental divorce but more by the predominant social structures within which they live. These are reflected in the representations of selves they have. The effects of previous experiences on future actions appear to be mediated by culture, the dominant way of living. Greek divorcees' offspring continue to be more oriented to family than their English counterparts. This seems to reflect the dominant role of family in Greek society (Georgas, 1990; Kongidou, 1995) depicted in the differences in possible selves reported by Greek and UK individuals. English divorcees' offspring's greater orientation to friends and colleagues seems to reflect an individualistic way of living, where people set less value on family and where work has become the main place of reference for them (Burns, 1995), in terms of developing independent construals of self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p.225). Greek society is a Mediterranean one, where the family is introverted in nature and the role of 'our people' is of great importance (Mousourou, 1985). Orientation to family is part of an individual's attempt to maintain a vital network of relationships with which one seems to form an interdependent whole (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p.246). This is not the case for English individuals whose independent construals of self orient them more to relationships with people outside the family, relationships which do not imply interdependence, i.e. relationships with colleagues and friends (Doumani, 1989). The possible temporary nature of these relationships is indicated in the information reported in the interviews.



The importance of being a family member in Greek society keeps divorcees' offspring oriented towards family although they focus narrowly on career, in terms of orientation to a particular occupation. This narrow career focus, however, needs to be understood in terms of the nature of the sample of the study, which is made up of well educated individuals. This orientation to career is not accompanied by orientation to relationships at work. Greek individuals scored higher than their English counterparts on possible selves being focused on a particular occupation but lower than UK individuals on relationships with colleagues. They also scored higher on being committed to and having a positive model of self as married and perceived themselves working towards avoiding parental mistakes. While they are career oriented, which is consistent with modern life in Greece they also perceive themselves more oriented to family than their English counterparts. Career seems to play a role in their lives as a place for self-actualization but not as a network for developing relationships as alternatives to family which is the case for UK individuals. This finding lends support to research indicating the existence of conflicting values in nuclear families where traditional and modern values coexist (Haritos-Fatouros and Hatzigeleki, 1997). In Greece, family is a central aspect of people's lives. The negative correlation between divorcees' offspring representations of selves concerning commitment to family and having a positive image of self as married and confidence about making relationships work and being open and committed to friends suggests that friends may substitute for family desires (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988) which are important for Greeks. The English divorcees' offspring's relative detachment from the family and their orientation to relationships outside the family and Greek divorcees' offspring orientation to personal relationships/family life, imply that the effects of parental divorce on the self are mediated by one's culture and the definition of self in this culture. This may be related to independent and interdependent construals of self in the Greek/Mediterranean and English/Western cultures respectively.

For UK individuals, the lower value individuals set on family and the tendency to leave home in the late teens may make people outside the family become more 'significant others' in one's life. Divorcees' offspring may turn to friends for support rather than the extended family. The high score on relationships with people i.e. friends and colleagues, outside the family environment indicates that UK individuals are more oriented towards such relationships. The high rate of divorce in the UK has possibly established a perception of self which does not

become deeply involved in intimate relationships with people, either family or friends (Doumani, 1989). The positive correlation in the UK sample between representations of selves relating to being committed to and having a positive model of marriage and being confident of making relationships work with representations of selves about being committed to friends suggests that the nature of the schemata dominating English participants' working self concept about involvement in intimate relationships are equally positive for both family and friendships. UK individuals also reported themselves more ambitious than their counterparts from intact families and also more oriented to relationships with colleagues. This indicates that occupation is not only a place for self-development but also for developing relationships with colleagues.

The present study suggests a mediating role for societal factors in the possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring concerning their future relationships with friends and colleagues. Social representations of divorce appear to affect the possible selves of divorcees' offspring when they experience negative circumstances in the course of parental divorce on two levels: (a) the macro-level relating to individuals having had such experiences and the society's attitudes towards divorce and those involved in it (b) the micro-level relating to the extent to which the offspring of divorcees become involved in social interaction outside the family as a reaction to this. In addition, whether the individual seeks increased interaction within friendship groups or in the work environment. The micro-level process may also be mediated by the prevailing values of the culture reflected in the dominant possible selves in each nationality. In the UK, there is a focus on the occupational environment whereas in Greece the family and social environment seem to dominate. This conclusion needs to be treated with some caution as the sample was derived from a relatively well-educated population with presumably good career prospects where work colleagues may share interests in common.

#### Divorce circumstances affecting the nature of possible selves relating to relationships

The theory of possible selves suggests that possible selves are cognitive schemata (emerging from life events), according to which self-knowledge lends structure and meaning to self-relevant experiences (Markus, 1977; Markus and Nurius, 1987). The core self-conceptions become active when they are invoked by an individual in response to an event or situation (Markus and Ruvolo,

1989). In terms of this theory, one would expect possible selves regarding relationships with people, developed by individuals who have experienced parental divorce, to be consistent with the nature of the events they have experienced during the divorce. Both Greek and English individuals who experienced positive circumstances during the parental divorce reported higher positive possible selves regarding their relationships with friends and colleagues. However, higher positive possible selves also occurred in relationships with the non-custodial parent over which the individuals had no control. In the English sample, the possible selves concerning relationships with friends were higher where the non-custodial parent had a live-in partner after the divorce. Regarding relationships with colleagues, higher positive possible selves were related to the presence of step-children in the non-custodial parent's new family. In the Greek sample, individuals scored higher in relationships with friends where the non-custodial parent remarried in the first two years after the divorce rather than later. The first two years after a major life event are indicated in the literature (Johnson, 1986) as the most stressful period for individuals' adjustment. The literature (Emery, 1988; Amato and Keith, 1991; Cockett and Tripp, 1994) also indicates that offspring have no control when their parents remarry and are often extremely unhappy. This is supported by the interview data in the study. It may be that where individuals have no control over a situation involving a significant other, the behaviour of whom has a negative effect on them, they develop a high positive self in another domain in order to reduce/buffer the negative emotion emerging from such events (Nurius, 1991). They may perceive themselves as undemanding with friends and open to socialising with colleagues because they need relationships with people outside the family to substitute for the changed relationship with the non-custodial parent (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988). The literature (Weiss, 1988; Holdnack, 1992; Cockett and Tripp, 1994) indicates that offspring are aware of the non-custodial parents' detachment from them and in the majority of the cases they experience their leaving as abandonment. From the child's perspective, the non-custodial parent often evokes contradictory feelings in the child, since they feel that s/he rejected them (Cockett and Tripp, 1994) but at the same time they need him/her as a significant other in their lives.

Such circumstances in parental divorce seem to be highly stressful for offspring. This has implication for interventions to reduce the negative affects of divorce.



### Individuals' appraisals of the attitude of macro and micro societies towards the divorce.

The study indicates that possible selves developed by individuals who have experienced negative circumstances in parental divorce are mediated by the:

- (a) social representation of the event and the value set by society on divorce
- (b) the appraisal of the group of people to whom they may refer in terms of its acceptance of the divorce. This last process is also mediated by the predominant way of living in a society.

The mediating role of the social representations of the divorce in divorcees' offspring orientation to significant supporting others is supported by a comparison of possible selves reported by Greek and UK participants according to the circumstances of parental divorce they experienced. Greek individuals who experienced negative events during the parental divorce reported higher positive possible selves regarding future friendships than their counterparts who experienced positive events and also their English counterparts who experienced negative events. Perhaps nationality has a mediating role in terms of the influence of *social attitudes* and values on appraisals of the environment and group of reference for divorcees' offspring (Nurius, 1991; Deaux, 1992). In Greece the events of parental divorce are perceived in a more stigmatised way than the UK, because of the low percentage of divorces in Greek society and the great value set on the family as a core societal unit (Doumani, 1989; Mousourou, 1989). Individuals therefore perceive the circumstances of parental divorce, as more negative. The study indicates that for the Greek individuals divorce is more traumatic in the long term than for their English counterparts. They reported themselves still trying to improve their relationships with their parents. The UK individuals reported themselves detached from the parental marriage once they were not living at home although they maintained contact with their parents. English individuals also did not want to have information about the divorce. Weiss (1988) reports that parental divorce can be perceived as a symbol of abandonment as primary relationships appear to be severed by choice. The main concerns of Greek divorcees' offspring seem to be (a) the reduction of the negative affect deriving from the stigma attached to them (Papadioti, 1993; Giddens, 1993) and (b) the reduction of the cognitive and emotional components or residues of stress developing from the negative experiences of parental divorce (Oyserman and Markus, 1993; Cantor and Zirkel, 1990). These may lead to friendships being developed as a source of support for long-term adjustment

(Nurius, 1991). Such relationships may counterbalance the negative events with positive representations of selves regarding friends who may become a substitute for family relationships and parents as significant others (McLanahan and Bumpass, 1988). Perhaps, the positive possible selves relating to friendships should not be taken at face value as positive but should be understood as the outcome of the negative experiences of parental divorce. This may lead divorcees' offspring to seek a reference group, as an alternative to family. This is supported by the negative correlation between the possible selves concerned with being confident about making relationships work, committed to and possessing a positive model of self as married with the possible selves about being committed and deeply involved in friendships.

The appraisal of the acceptance of divorce by the environment/group of people (Showers and Cantor, 1985; Cantor and Zirkel, 1990) should indicate whether the environment will be supportive if they communicate their identity as divorcees' offspring and their negative experiences of parental divorce. This is supported by the finding that Greek individuals scored higher on being open to relationships with colleagues where they experienced positive rather than negative circumstances of parental divorce. English individuals scored the highest where they reported a negative life event. This suggests a mediating role for stigma which may encourage divorcees' offspring to orient towards the most familiar group of individuals. This support group appears to be defined by the dominant representations of selves relating to the style of living in each society. English society emphasises an individualistic style of living focused on occupational life/career and personal fulfilment (Van de Kaa, 1987) which makes colleagues, members of their second home (Corbett, 1997). Consequently, English individuals' greater orientation to relationships with colleagues when they experience negative circumstances in parental divorce reflects their way of living. In contrast, in Greece the occupational environment is a less important source of support. Greek studies (Mousourou, 1989) indicate that for females occupation is a much less significant part of their life. Greek divorcees' offspring cannot be sure that the occupational environment can securely contain/afford (Oyserman and Markus, 1993; Showers and Cantor, 1985; Deaux, 1992; Cantor and Zirkel, 1990; Nurius, 1991) the part of their identity as divorcees' offspring. The capacity to deal with other's "feelings" is of great importance, and the interplay of needs to like and be liked, giving pleasure, appreciation and acceptance are all important in the occupational world (Parsons and Bales, 1955, p. 156). Greek



individuals might therefore be cautious in communicating their identity as divorcees' offspring at work as divorce is viewed negatively in Greek society.

Individuals who have experienced a stressful life-event/divorce may be positive towards people and environments with which they are not familiar only when they feel comfortable and do not possess negative images of selves as socially deviant. This may indicate that Greek individuals are open to developing friendships with colleagues only if they feel confident that they will not be stigmatised because of the divorce. They may be cautious in being open with others (Frable et al, 1990) because of their appraisal of environmental and social circumstances which are made before they plan or take any action (Showers and Cantor, 1985; Nurius, 1991). In contrast, English individuals scored the highest on being keen on relationships with colleagues where they perceive negative events in the course of parental divorce. Their perception (the outcome of the appraisal) of the environment as a friendly one, in which they can invest and rely upon is intimately related to their social intelligence in terms of their expertise and experiences in constructing their personal social learning history (Cantor and Kihlstrom, 1987).

Summarising, it is friends rather than colleagues to whom Greek individuals turn when they experience parental divorce. However, the reference group for English individuals in similar circumstances is colleagues rather than friends. This suggests that there might be a mediating role for the appraisal of the affordance of the micro-society, i.e. whether it is accepting enough to allow divorcees' offspring to communicate their identity as divorcees' offspring. The appraisal of the affordance of the environment is likely to be preconditioned by the appraisal of social attitudes towards divorce that are experienced. This constitutes a part of identity and is mediated by the dominant mode of living in each society. In an individualistic society, the most influential environment is the occupational environment since individuals invest less time in relationships with people. They are more self-reliant focusing on occupation and self-actualization in terms of personal and career fulfilment (Burns, 1995). In Greek society which is based on and oriented to relationships, friendship is the most familiar social context and becomes a ready alternative to family. Consequently, the possible selves possessed by individuals who experience negative circumstances in the course of parental divorce, are mediated by two processes of appraisal at the macro and micro-level: (a) appraisal of the life event according to the social representations



towards it and (b) appraisal of the affordance of the micro-society, the group of reference, the selection of the most familiar and accepting environment in order to communicate with others. The second appraisal is preconditioned by the first one and is mediated by the mode of living in each society. The nature of life events does not always guide future patterns of actions. Individuals' actions are guided and mediated by the social perception of divorce which affects the selection of the context, the micro-society and the people to whom individuals who experience a stressful life event can refer. The mediating factors relate to the values and attitudes of the society towards the divorce and the orientation to a certain supporting group is guided by the dominant representations of selves related to the dominant mode of living in each society.

#### Understanding the intergenerational transmission of marital instability.

The study indicates few differences between individuals from divorced and intact families within each society in comparison to those between the two nationalities. This reveals the importance of societal and cultural factors in developing possible selves. However, there are findings which may illuminate the intergenerational transmission of marital instability. The interview study demonstrates that divorce is a possibility for divorcees' offspring who report more negative than positive possible selves concerning their own family life than their counterparts from intact families. Only divorcees' offspring reported themselves likely to become divorced in the future although they did not attach negative value to it. This may indicate a more permissive attitude towards divorce and a view of marriage as a temporary commitment.

Divorcees' offspring in the overall sample had lower scores on avoiding parental mistakes in their marital life and higher scores on relationships outside family, i.e. friends and colleagues, compared to individuals from intact families. This may illuminate the intergenerational transmission of divorce suggested by previous studies (Pope and Mueller, 1976; Mueller and Pope, 1977) by implying a lack of strong representations of self compared to their counterparts from intact families, regarding avoiding parental mistakes. This could work as an incentive for activation of certain patterns of behaviour (Cantor et al, 1986; Markus and Nurius, 1986, 1987) which may lead to a happy family/marital life.

Support for studies (Gleen and Kramer, 1987) indicating a high rate of divorce for divorcees'

offspring comes from English participants' higher ambition to have a career than their counterparts from intact families. They may spend more effort, time and energy on career which may imply less expenditure of effort for other aspects of life, personal relationships/family life.

Taking account of the findings of the present study and earlier research indicating the low socioeconomic and occupational status of divorcees' offspring (Hill et al, 1987; Nock, 1988; Wadsworth et al, 1990; Amato and Keith, 1991), further research appears to be required exploring divorcees' offspring efficacy and success in their career, given their ambition. The subgoals set by divorcees' offspring in order to achieve success in their career and the qualities of self they possess regarding self-efficacy and self-esteem could be explored in relation to the divorce circumstances they experienced. The present study sheds light on the nature of the circumstances of parental divorce experienced by individuals and their orientation to career. Although English divorcees' offspring are more ambitious than those from intact families, those who experienced positive relations with the custodial parent and the step-parent and the presence of the new spouse of the non-custodial parent reported higher positive representations of selves regarding being ambitious in their future career, than their counterparts who reported negative experiences. Such positive relations with the custodial parent and the stepparent possibly provide individuals with hierarchical authority relations which may be lacking in single parent families, particularly where the single parent is the mother. This finding supports the evidence that there is an important role for the stepparent in contributing to the existence of hierarchical authority relations. This presupposes that the family plays a major role in preparing the young for economic and social roles. The institutional contexts in which achievement occurs (the economy, education, occupation) are fundamentally hierarchical, a subordinate is under the authority of any member of a superordinate group. The family seems to act as the prototype for all superordinate-subordinate relationships one encounters. This idea was the cornerstone for Parson's assertion about the structural features of the functional family, namely that it included a main earner who represented to the children the nature of authority relations in extra-familial settings (Parsons and Bales, 1955). Also Bowles and Gintis suggest that in intact, nuclear families, parents produce in their children attitudes and beliefs that correspond to those demanded in schools and the workplace which lead to success in school and occupation. Children who are not part of such a hierarchy will be less capable of functioning within any organisation so structured (Nock, 1988).



This disadvantage is reported in the literature as translating into poorer achievement. It could also be that the affective quality of the family context influences the individuals' sense of trust and security thereby influencing his/her willingness to explore and make commitments to various life alternatives (Papini, 1994).

The intergenerational transmission of divorce is also illuminated by findings regarding father's educational level. English divorcees' offspring who reported their parents being lower educated scored lower on avoiding parental mistakes than their counterparts from intact families and those whose fathers were highly educated. Since they possess a weaker representation of self than that possessed by their counterparts from intact families regarding avoiding parental mistakes, they are more likely than those from intact families to repeat parental mistakes. According to the theory of possible selves, representations of selves which are vague, weak and general are less effective than clear specific intentions to perform well (Locke et al, 1981; Markus and Ruvolo, 1989). Goals that individuals feel to be important, involving or to which they are committed are effective because these goals are self-relevant and self-defining and as the result the desired end state, will be easier to form into a unit with the self. The literature suggests that lower educated fathers tend not to keep regular contact with the child in the post-divorce period (Furstenberg et al, 1983; Emery, 1988). Their absence may create a negative experience for the child who may then look for an alternative group of reference. This suggestion is supported by the higher scores of divorcees' offspring whose fathers were lower educated on the possible selves concerning being keen on developing friendships and being readily involved in such relationships compared with those whose parents were higher educated and their counterparts from intact families.

Regarding the Greek sample, currently there is no statistical evidence that there is intergenerational transmission of parental divorce. This research has demonstrated that divorcees' offspring who themselves have got married report less positive representation of selves about avoiding parental mistakes, being confident of making relationships work and optimistic about relationships/marital life than their counterparts from intact families. These findings would suggest that the intergenerational transmission of marital instability may occur in Greece as well. The lack of confidence in relation to personal relationships/marital success is consistent with previous findings indicating that divorcees' offspring have external locus of control and low self-



esteem (Wiehe, 1984; Holdnack, 1992). Since possible selves are cognitive schemata which regulate behaviour (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989), individuals possessing a weak representation of self regarding avoiding parental mistakes, may not employ patterns of actions which would efficiently lead to avoidance of parental mistakes. In the Greek sample, married divorcees' offspring scored lower on positive representations of self about avoiding parental mistakes than their single counterparts. The difference in these scores was greater for individuals from divorced than intact families. This reflects the work of Wallerstein (1985, 1991) who found that the majority of divorcees' offspring have ideas of a lasting marriage but are frightened about repeating their parents' unhappy marriage. They were also less optimistic about the success of their own future marriage than their counterparts from intact families (Franklin et al, 1990). This may be explained by their representation of self as less optimistic and confident about making relationships work and having a successful marriage, compared to that reported by individuals from intact families. The possibility that divorcees' offspring will subsequently have an unhappy marriage is supported by the fact that almost equally positive representations of selves are reported by both single and married Greek participants, regarding being optimistic and confident of having a successful marriage. There is no considerable increase in this when they are actually married. This was not the case for their counterparts from intact families where there was an increase. Married individuals from intact families reported considerably increased positive representations of self about being optimistic and confident about making relationships work compared to that reported by their single counterparts. This may be because divorcees' offspring possess ideal highly positive representations of selves about their future marital life which are unrealistic. The unrealistic nature of the possible self regarding future marital/family life emerged from the information reported in the interviews. This was not the case for those from intact families who seem to have limited expectations before they got married about their ability to have a successful marital life. Individuals from intact families are perhaps better prepared for the difficulties of family life. Real marital life subsequently proves to be easier than they had imagined.

Regarding gender differences in the UK sample, the findings do not cast light on research which shows a higher percentage of divorce in divorcees' female offspring (Gleen and Kramer, 1987). The relative detachment of English divorcees' offspring from family life is indicated in females'

orientation towards other reference groups, friends and colleagues, and the possible selves relating to the development of relationships with friends compared to individuals from intact families. The findings support the notion of females having socio-centric self-schema where relationships with people form a part of the self while the individualistic self of males is expressed by a lesser orientation to close relationships with friends. Divorcees' male offspring scored similarly to males and females from intact families on being open to socialising with colleagues, although lower than their female counterparts. However, this possible self did not relate to deep involvement in such relationships (Joseph, 1992; Curry et al, 1994). The higher level of rating on possible selves of divorcees' female offspring's orientation to friends does not support previous findings. The earlier literature indicates them becoming more solitary within personal relationships than those from intact families (Weiss, 1988). Some earlier research also indicates lack of differences in relationships with friends reported by individuals from divorced and intact families (Demo and Acock, 1988).

Although the findings for females do not support earlier research the study shows that English divorcees' offspring were more career oriented than their counterparts from intact families. According to the theory of possible selves, the clearest and strongest representations of selves respond to relevant cues in the environment integrating them into future possible selves. This in turn may enhance goal related performance (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989). Those individuals whose strongest possible selves are related to occupation will invest time and energy in that, possibly at the expense of family life. Existing schemata predispose individuals to be biased towards information relevant for them. The rest tends to be ignored (Neisser, 1976). The findings of this study suggest that career may provide an alternative to family life in early industrialised, urbanised and highly individualistic societies for those who have experienced parental divorce. This may then lead to the divorce pattern repeating it self.

From the evidence from possible selves and the implications of the theory Greek male divorcees' offspring are more likely to get divorced in the future than their female counterparts or males from intact families. Divorcees' male offspring scored considerably lower on avoiding parental mistakes than males from intact families and lower than their female counterparts. This may lead to less environmental cues which may promote happy married life available to them so that the

desired end state does not easily form a unit with the self. According to the theory of possible selves (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989), this may result in reduced effort being expended by the individuals towards this goal. Female divorcees' offspring scored almost equal to those from intact families. No suggestions can be made in relation to the nature of their marital life compared to their counterparts from intact families.

Overall, the study provides limited information regarding gender differences on the long-term effects of parental divorce on the possible selves explored in the study. The data from the UK sample revealed that divorcees' female offspring were more oriented towards relationships with people outside the family (friends and colleagues) than their male counterparts and individuals from intact families. In the Greek sample, males had lower scores on avoiding parental mistakes in their personal family life than females and their counterparts from intact families. Explanations for these gender differences are likely to be complex and may depend on the particular circumstances of the divorce and individual's gender identity in conjunction with the social representation of divorce in the society.

Explanations for the intergenerational transmission of marital instability for the two nationalities may derive from different paths. Regarding English divorcees' offspring, the intergenerational transmission of divorce may be related to their greater career ambition and orientation to relationships with colleagues and friends than their counterparts from intact families. Regarding the Greek sample, Greek divorcees' married offspring were less optimistic about their future personal relationships/family life and confident about making relationships work and perceived themselves less positive in working towards avoiding parental mistakes, than their counterparts from intact families. Overall, divorcees' offspring are less oriented to avoiding parental mistakes than their counterparts from intact families. This according to the theory of possible selves may result in less effort expended for the achievement of this goal. This may throw light on the 'disinhibitory effect' of parental divorce on divorcees' offspring according to which they perceive divorce in the case of an unhappy marriage as a more viable option than individuals from intact families.



Individual's educational level, social attitudes, and 'stigma' towards divorce as mediating factors to the intergenerational transmission of divorce.

The study did not indicate interactions between nationality and individuals' demographic characteristics in terms of possible selves. The only difference between Greek and English divorcees' offspring, concerns educational level. The lower educated Greek divorcees' offspring scored the lowest on the possible selves regarding being satisfied with personal relationships and being prepared to be committed to friends and being involved in close friendships. The negative social attitude and the stigma attached to individuals involved in a divorce possibly relates to lower self-esteem (Frable et al, 1990; Crocker et al, 1991) and leads to individuals who do not possess strong qualities of self, e.g. derived from education (given the high value set on education in the Greek society), to have less positive representations of selves relating to important domains of life, e.g. personal relationships and close friendships, than their counterparts who live in a society where divorce is not perceived as stigmatising. Greek lower educated divorcees' offspring's low score on being involved in friendships, may be of great importance since friends could provide an alternative point of reference in their lives (McLanahan, and Bumpass, 1988). Consequently, lower educated Greek divorcees' offspring, may be a group who are particularly vulnerable after parental divorce.

For the Greek highly educated divorcees' offspring, the social stigma may have less of a negative impact on their possible self relating to being satisfied with relationships. Given the high value set on education in Greek society education may have an ameliorating effect in relation to stigma. What makes the difference is the individuals' personal social learning history (Cantor and Kihlstrom, 1987). Education and qualifications may act as protective factors for self-esteem in a society where education is highly valued. For those in the UK with higher levels of education, this is not the case. Perhaps, given the high rate of divorce in English society and personal experience of parental divorce future prospects for relationships appear negative. English divorcees' offspring live in an environment where divorce is common place and within everyone's experience either personal or vicarious (Brown and Inouye, 1978; Bandura, 1982). This may affect their perception of their self-efficacy, since the information they perceive from the environment, about the nature of family life in modern societies, is of a negative nature. This may lower their judgments of their capabilities and undermine their efforts (Brown and Inouye,

1978; Bandura, 1982). Highly educated individuals may be more likely than their lower educated counterparts to be aware of the consequences and the underlying meaning of divorce presented to them by various sources, i.e. media, demographic statistics and vicarious experiences.

Those who seem to be more likely than others to be more dissatisfied with current relationships, are the lower educated Greek and higher educated English individuals. Assuming that being dissatisfied with current relationships comprises a domain of one's overall self-identity, perhaps these individuals perceive themselves achieving a less positive marital life in the future. This may influence the extent to which they are motivated to work towards that end. The lower educated Greek individuals scored lower than their English counterparts while higher educated Greek individuals scored higher than their English counterparts on this possible self and also on the possible selves regarding being prepared to be committed and close to friends. These findings could be perhaps explained in terms of the mediating role of education in each country. Greek society sets a high value on education compared to other European countries (Tsoukalas, 1977; Katakis, 1984), thus lower educated individuals may perceive themselves as less effective because of their perceptions of themselves and the perceptions of others are likely to reinforce negative possible selves regarding being able to cope with difficulties they may encounter in their lives. This may link with earlier research which suggested that prejudice and discrimination against members of stigmatised groups will result in lowered self-esteem and diminished self-concept for the stigmatised (Crocker et al, 1991, p. 218). Being aware that they are regarded negatively by others one would expect that those negative attitudes would be incorporated into the self-concept and consequently they will be lower in self-esteem.

### Implications

The findings of the study have implications for counsellors and social workers who provide psychological support for University students since they illuminate the effects of divorce on young adult offspring's relationships with peers, career success and occupational relationships.

From a clinical perspective the research indicates that family therapists, need to focus on the closeness of the relationships between the child and the custodial, non-custodial parent and step-parent. The child's presence during parental conflict is also important. Interventions may focus

on the effects of these relationships in both cultures. The results suggest that interacting with the parents and to a lesser extent the step-parent can affect offspring's relationships with people in the long term. Reframing of the individual's relationship with significant others in the biological and new family, both parents and step-parents, should be viewed as a way of improving offspring's relationships with both friends and colleagues. These relationships, can be explored within the context of the divorcees' offspring's perception of themselves as members of a society which either affords or stigmatises individuals' involvement in a divorce. Where the social acceptance of divorce is limited the positive possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring regarding relationships with people outside the family environment could be treated as substitutes for family life. Individuals' relationships with the non-custodial parent and stepparent and parental conflicts could be reframed.

Therapy might also beneficially address the role of the non-custodial parent. The study indicated the important role played by the non-custodial parent in the formation of possible selves relating to relationships with people, friends and colleagues, for individuals of each nationality. The presence of the non-custodial parent in the life of their offspring should be understood in terms of their experience of abandonment and rejection. His/her presence may relate to his/her role as a model for internalising the patterns of behaviour for individuals of both sexes; for males in terms of identification with the father and for females in terms of the adoption of complementary behaviours to those displayed by the father (Lamb, 1977). Furthermore, the detrimental effects of parental conflicts, especially where children are present (Jacobson, 1978), on relationships should seriously be taken into account by both parents, practitioners and counsellors. It is important to alert the parent to the fact that interparent hostility can affect the child in the long-term. However, while it may be appropriate to help parents consider whether or not interparent hostility can be minimised, it is naive to think they can stop hostility because they are told to do so. Parents need help for themselves during this period (Jacobson 1978). Discussion of the child's needs may intensify the parents' guilt and complicate the situation. Given that the events of divorce involve both parents and children interventions may best focus on both.



### Limitations of the study

The study is a primary exploration of the mediating role of social factors in individuals' possible selves. The methodology followed proved appropriate to reveal the role of dominant representations of selves in each culture which mediate the representations of selves which differentiated individuals from intact and divorced families. The interviews and questionnaires as methodological techniques, regardless of their limitations, presented themselves as appropriate to explore the effects of divorce as a life event affecting Greek and English individuals. The interviews provided in depth insights, the questionnaires a means of explaining cross cultural factors.

One of the main limitations of the study concerns the sampling technique. This was used because of the difficulty of access to institutions and organisation for divorcees. The limited number of participants, when considered in terms of the ways they experienced parental divorce, did not allow detailed analysis of the divorce circumstances on possible selves. In addition, further statistical analysis of the data, i.e. discriminant analysis, was impossible because of the size of the sample. Similarly, cluster analysis classifying divorcees' offspring according to their scores on possible selves, was not possible although it may have indicated particular types of experiences which led to the development of particular possible selves. Factor analysis was not employed for similar reasons. However, these could be useful for further exploration of the circumstances of the parental divorce which affect the representations of selves possessed by offspring. Research with a large sample would be important for the detailed exploration of the circumstances of parental divorce in relation to possible selves reported by divorcees' offspring, and the identification of groups of individuals according to the representations of selves they possess.

The restricted access to a large sample at this age range, accompanied with the small number of male participants and the fact that the sample mainly consisted of University students suggest that the results may generalise to a limited population until they are replicated and supported by further research (Smith, 1983).

The population making up the sample, postgraduate students, indicated educational level as a

factor which may mediate differences, especially gender differences, between representations of selves reported by individuals from intact and divorced families especially regarding family life. Highly educated individuals may have a great variety of experiences, more elaborate ways of thinking, alternative perceptions and approaches to understanding divorce. This implies that they may overcome more easily than other groups of people the negative effects of parental divorce. However, they may also set low value on the family life, becoming mainly oriented to career and seeking personal fulfilment.

The few observed differences between individuals from intact and divorced families especially with regard to family life may be mediated by the individuals' age. The cognitive elaboration of past experiences and changes over-time possibly eliminate the negative impact of parental divorce. The offspring's personal experiences may also lead them to sympathise, or not, with their parents.

Although the study, as any other based on recollections, has the limitation that participants may either have forgotten or redefined the nature of the family situation and divorce over time, one could argue that it is the perception on the part of the participant that it is really important, more so even than the actual circumstances of the parental divorce. However, one limitation of the study concerns the residue of unhappy experiences relating to the divorce which although perceived as positive now had a negative meaning and impact at the time they occurred. In other words, it may be the experience of the event at that particular time which matters rather than the present report of the situation. This should be understood in terms of residues of past experience and the following feelings and cognitions (May et al., 1991) which may be related to the nature of the offspring's current representations of selves.

The individuals' personal life is not taken into account by the present study. However, personal relationships with partners may also mediate the negative effect of parental divorce; personal experiences may soften or increase the negative effects of the divorce. Studies focusing on divorcees' offspring's current personal life, their own experience of intimate relationships, cohabitation with partners and marital life, would illuminate such suggestions.

In addition, data regarding possible selves was collected through self-reports and therefore social desirability may have biased the findings. However, this may have been reduced by the sampling technique employed, since the participants of the study were volunteers.

These methodological limitations can be addressed in future research by increasing the sample sizes under investigation, the use of behavioural assessments to corroborate findings, and the employment of a sample consisting of offspring from a greater diversity of educational background.

For the main sample, questionnaires were used to obtain information about the divorce. This methodological technique may have not been sufficiently thorough or sensitive to collect information about the divorce scenario. Details of the circumstances of parental divorce may have been missed. The questionnaire was long to allow description of the divorce scenario in as greater detail as possible. However, this may have created motivational problems for its completion. Qualitative research techniques may be the most appropriate for collection of detailed information about divorce. A case study, mainly adopting qualitative techniques has the advantage of identifying the multiplicity of factors involved. This is one of the main limitations of generalisation regarding research findings on the effects of divorce on children, as noted by Sorosky (1972) and Hetherington (1982).

The research established only a limited picture of pre-divorce family life. The decision to restrict this information was taken after the interviews were undertaken. They indicated that a limited number of memories were available to individuals about family life pre-divorce. This lack of exploration of the influence of the pre-divorce family life on the possible selves of divorcees' offspring is a clear limitation of the study.

The study also indicates the need for longitudinal research to explore the causal relationships between parental divorce and offspring's orientation to either family or career and the effect of the primary relationships they develop with parents on relationships they make later in their lives.

Despite its limitations, the present study indicates the dimension of cultural differences as a



crucial one in divorcees' offspring representations of selves regarding their future family, friendships and occupation. The perception of selves as offspring of divorcees seems to be affected by the social representations of family and the loss of it. The results of this research indicate the importance of positive social attitudes and acceptance of divorce by society for offspring's future life, particularly concerning relationships with people, and their perceptions of themselves as deviant. The study does not shed light on the mechanisms by which possible selves may operate or whether aspects of the theory stand up. The notion that having positive and negative possible selves in the same domain is a more powerful motivation has not been explored.

On the basis of the findings of the present study, further research should concentrate on the goals and subgoals, set by divorcees' offspring as ways of approaching major issues such as selection of a partner, trust in friends, selection of occupation and success in occupation. This enable further theorising about the planned actions towards certain goals and shed light on how possible selves act as incentives for future behaviour.

It would also be interesting to explore the intergenerational transmission of marital instability, through a metacognitive perspective focusing on the quality of offspring's personal life, reasons for unhappiness; whether divorcees' offspring relate the parental divorce to their personal life. The disinhibitory effect of marital instability could be illuminated by the ways of avoidance of negative experiences in personal family life and relationships and the steps towards that, adopted by divorcees' offspring.

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## **APPENDICES**



## **APPENDIX A**

### **The interview schedule regarding individual's from divorced families was the following:**

First of all, I would like to thank you for your decision to help me in my study by providing information regarding your parental and your own life. This interview is a part of a project concerning parental divorce and how young adults perceive it. I am also interested in the way you see yourself in the future regarding aspects of life like family (your personal family), occupational life, friendships and leisure time preferences. I have to say that there are no right or wrong answers, what I am particularly interested in is your personal thoughts about parental divorce and also thoughts or images of yourself in the future. The information you provide is absolutely confidential and I can also be committed to give you a brief presentation of the results of the study if you are interested in.

#### **POSSIBLE SELVES**

- How do you imagine yourself in the near future? Just make a brain-storming.
- What do you hope for to happen in the future with regard to:  
family (your own family, partner/spouse),  
friendships (make new friends or not, close or not friends)  
occupational life/colleague relationships,  
leisure time. How would you like to spend your leisure time? Either with others' company or on your own, and what sort of things would you enjoy mostly?
- Which one of the above situations you would like most to happen (most desired self) in your life? Why?
- What are you afraid of being (what's the worst thing that would happen in your life) with regard to each one of the above mentioned areas of life  
your own family- why?  
occupation/ relationships with colleagues why?  
friendships- why?  
leisure- why?
- overall?

- Which one of the possible selves with regard to:

- family life

- friendships

- occupation/relationships with colleagues

- leisure

do you perceive as most possible to happen to you?

- Which one of all the possible selves you mentioned is the most possible to become true?/

Which of all the possible selves you mentioned is the most important to you to become true?

- How capable do you feel of accomplishing each possible self you mentioned with regard to each area of life (family, friendships, occupation, leisure) you mentioned above? Why?

- How likely do you think it is that all these possible selves could come true in the above mentioned areas of life? Why?

- What have you done for each one of the above mentioned possible selves (with regard to each of the four areas of life) that you think could make what you wish for come true in the future?

- Are you satisfied with your work? Why, to what extent?

- Are you satisfied with your studies? Why? To what extent?

- Are you satisfied with your personal life(affairs)? Why? To what extent?

- Are you satisfied with your friendships? Why? To what extent?

- Are you satisfied with your way of enjoying yourself, your leisure time? Why? To what extent?

- How you imagine yourself overall in the future? - being happy or not with regard to what you mentioned so far?

## **PARENTAL DIVORCE**

Now I would like you to reflect back and recollect information regarding your life at home, when you were living with your parents. What do you remember about their relationship? You told me that your parents decided to live separately, they got divorced sometime in the past.... so...

How old you were when divorce took place?

How did this event came in your life? What was the situation at home?

## **PRE- DIVORCE (SEPARATION)**

How was the situation at home before divorce?

When did your parents relationship deteriorate?

What do you think that led them up to divorce?

Who initiated the divorce/ or separation? How this was announced to you? Were you aware of any problems your parents faced in their marital life?

Why did it happen?

What/s the worst part of this?

Reflecting back, is there any positive outcome?

## **IMMEDIATELY AFTER SEPARATION**

What happened in the period immediately after s/he left/ How was the situation at home, your parent(s)?

## **UP TO NOWADAYS**

What happened since that?

What's the relationship your parents have now?

What's your relationship with each one of your parents?

Are there any more fights between you parents?

What's the worst thing of separation-divorce?

Does this imbalance situation at home continues until now?



REMARRIAGE/ custodial parent

Is any of your parents remarried now?

What's the situation at home-where did you live after the divorce (now)?

How is your relationship with the stepparent?

How is your relationship with your residential parent?

What's the worst part of your custodial parent (mother/ father) remarriage?

Is there any positive outcome from this remarriage, for you?

REMARRIAGE/ non custodial parent

What's the situation, your relationship with your non-residential parent? Do you often meet him/her? Are you happy sharing some days with him/her?

How is your relationship with his/her new partner/spouse?

What's the worst part of your his/her (mother/ father) remarriage?

Is there any positive outcome from this remarriage, for you?

SUPPORT

Did you ask for any support?

Did anybody support you or your parents during the divorce? Who? How?

**The interview schedule regarding individual's from intact families was the following:**

First of all, I would like to thank you for your decision to help me in my study by providing information regarding your parental and your own life. This interview is a part of a project concerning life in parental family and how young adults perceive it, retrospectively. I am also interested in the way you see yourself in the future regarding basic disciplines of life like family (your personal family), occupational life, friendships and leisure time preferences. I have to say that there are no right or wrong answers, what I am particularly interested in is your personal thoughts about life in your parental family and also your own thoughts or images of yourself in the future. The information you provide is absolutely confidential and I can also be committed to give you a brief presentation of the results of the study if you are interested in.

The questions for the possible selves are the same as reported in the previous section for individuals from divorced families. No questions were asked about the functioning of the parental family.

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW/FIRST PART (CONCERNING POSSIBLE SELVES)

(S 9)

Age: 24

Sex: female

Nationality: Greek

Job: student

Father's occupation: businessman

Mother's job: housewife

This is a study focusing on the way people imagine themselves in the future. However, I'd like to have realistic answers, what you think it is likely and possible to happen in the future in your life. I'd like to know what you think about, what you hope for and what you are afraid of happening in your life. What I am particularly interested in is what you think about your own personal family life, your future friendships, relationships with colleagues, your future occupation/ career and your leisure. There are no right or wrong answers. What matters is only what you imagine yourself in these aspects of life in the future. How you imagine yourself in the future. I would also like to have some information about your parental family life.

R: I'd like you to tell me how can you see yourself in the near future?

S: I can see myself looking for a job in Greece, I may have a job, not something important, I see myself trying to find a job... looking for a job, actually...All these after studies. About my personal life I can not really answer this question, it is something far away from me, I cannot see anything really.

R: How would you like then to see yourself in the future, regarding your personal life?

S: You know, I'd like to have a good relationship, a comfortable relationship actually, I don't know if you understand what I mean, a stable relationship. I'd like to have my own life, to have my own job and I'd like him to do the same, to have a stable job, to be together as a couple and to be happy. I'd like to have the best as everybody wants to. I don't really want to have passionate relationship with my husband, not ups and downs, I'd like to get comfort from that relationship, no troubles, no arguments, not always being worried about what is going to happen with him... not to have endless discussions and arguments without any profit to come out of that.. . I mean you know... to come up with some sort of answer and solution to our problems. I want both of us to be independent in our relationship, in the family. I want to have a sort of personal life on



my own and to be as independent as possible. I don't know how difficult it is for something like that to come true... but I need that. I cannot imagine myself in a conventional family, a miserable and a routine life, that's something I really hate... I'm not keen on the idea of sharing everything and two different personalities to be forced to accept each other because of the marriage.

R: Is there anything that you are afraid of happening in the future?

S: I am afraid of illnesses and deaths, to lose my mother or my father, things like that. Regarding realistic fears I cannot see something important... I think everybody is afraid the career dreams he makes not to become real, I am also afraid of a bad relationship a difficult relationship... I don't have any specific fear regarding the future.

R: What about family, how can you see yourself in a family?

S: I have a very romantic aspect of family. I imagine myself in a very happy family, perfectly happy, like Bill Cosby, you know... me being a perfect mother having a brilliant relationship with both my husband and my children ... to have good jobs, and coming back home in the afternoon and everyone to be very happy, I know that it is not possible for that to happen but that's how I want to think of my future family... I'd like to have a house with the kitchen and the living room on the ground floor and the bedrooms upstairs and everybody will be terribly busy and we'll love etc. I know that it sounds very stupid. I don't want to think about it from a negative perspective, to have a negative point of view because this would make me terrible sad. I want to believe and because of the divorce of course, that I will have a perfect family and I don't make mistakes like my own parents.

R: is it something you are afraid of in relation to your own family?

S: No, I haven't thought too much about family and things like that because I am concerned about different things ... but what I wouldn't like to have in my life is of course to have a divorce. I always think of the possibility of divorce and that I have to be prepared for that... although I want to see things from a positive perspective it is important to be aware of that possibility ... I shall cope with it.. if it comes, yes, I shall cope with it.. yes.. I think so... I want to believe that I'll be able to cope with that... I know that there is a high possibility for this coming true ... everything is possible in life... I know that there is high possibility all these to come true, because many people get divorced, I don't know really if many people get divorced or if I am stuck with the divorce because my parents are divorced... I don't know... but I know statistically that many people get divorced, so I want me to be ready even for that.

R: Regarding friendships how do you see yourself in the future?

S: Good, I see things from a positive perspective. I know that I will always have a friend around. That's what has happened to my life until now. I always have a friend with who I feel very close, I am close to her, I love her and she loves me as well. I have two friends with whom I believe that we will be friends for a long time but I have stopped being so credulous... you know... to believe that friendships mean love and trust

each other for ever , they do not last for ever and I know that as you get older you realise that there are other factors that intervene in that... even with these people I have the feeling that we don't understand each other sometimes... we may not suit each other, so I may make new friends. But I have a positive perspective on that because I haven't experienced any betrayals until now.

R: Is there anything you are afraid of with regard to your friendships?

S: No, I don't think so. Sometimes I have thought that... although I have close friends with whom I share so many things and we are always together, we can not actually understand each other ... so, sometimes I think that there is no real friends and I may have to be cautious of people... but I don't think that it is that bad... I can cope with any problems about friendships. Yes... I have to admit that I'm quite cautious of people. Especially, I sometimes have the feeling that I should be realistic, friendships do not last for ever. But in general I like being with people, making friends.

R: How do you imagine yourself in the future in a working environment with colleagues?

S: Many years ago I was very afraid of the way I had to behave to my colleagues and treat them, because of the fear of failure. in my job in case I am not good at public relations. I believe that in the kind of work I want to be in, media, you have to be a very stable person and be sure for yourself otherwise you fail... but with the passage of time I feel more confident, I think that I will be able to be in charge and I will be able to impose myself if I have to, I will be able to... but what I am afraid of is if I am able to keep my mouth closed when I have to. I think I trust my self and I hope that I'll manage to do well in my work. But this is something that does not entirely depend on me. It also depends on my colleagues, and on the quality of my work, but I am optimistic in general I think..., no to 100%... but I think I am quite optimistic, as much as I can. I always have moments I really doubt if I manage to do well. I am thinking about how I will be in my work environment. I think this is the same with school, as if you are at school, to be just yourself but to leave space to others to exist also with you, in the same environment. But I don't want to work in a competitive environment. I'll have troubles with colleagues and superiors. I don't know how difficult it is going to be but I don't want to get involved in such situations. In the past I was really afraid of social relationships in the occupational environment.. I told you I was really scared. I feel much better now... do I? I don't know...

R: Is there anything here you are afraid of being in the future?

S: Yes, I am afraid of not doing well in my job. I am afraid of not saying the right thing on the right time, if I don't have the right attitude towards something, if I do some mistakes. But on the other hand I am quite optimistic and I want to think in a positive way towards the future.

R: How do you see yourself in the future about leisure?

S: I want to believe that I'll have an expanded social life. I usually prefer social activities, going out and staying out late in the night with my peers, you know students



form the University. I cannot stay home too long. Enjoyment for me is to go to bars, pubs etc... I like going out quite often, and I want to hope that I will keep on doing that in the future, and if my dreams about being rich and famous come true, then I think that my social life will also be very rich... as I told you before... this perfect image I have for the future. I have just realised, it is just now I am talking ... that I actually realised that this image is too perfect to be true, this positive image of life, everything being good and nice and my social life as well. I have just realised that it is not possible actually, I haven't thought about this before. I used to imagine myself always happy, being with friends, acquaintances etc..

R: Is there anything you are afraid of happening in your life the future?

S: No, I haven't ever thought about all these things. What I am telling you now, comes from the belief I will easily have all this. I want to believe that I will manage to succeed in my work and that it will be of great importance for me. And if this goes well, then many other things will go well as well, like my social life, easy relationship with my husband and with my children etc.

R: So, which one of all these you see as most possible?

S: Yes, my work. I think that it will be the major thing in my life. If I work where I want, Media, ... I know that it is time consuming job, but I know, that it is very likely all the other activities in my life will be related to that, I mean my social life and my friendships. I think that my colleagues will be my friends since I spend the biggest amount of my time with them, I mean at work. They will be my friends. You share so many things with them.. you know how it is. You can say everything all the day through... everyday. So, I see myself involved in both a successful career and a family as well but family is not my priority, I don't think of my family very much but I am pretty sure that it will happen in my life. What dominates my thinking at the moment is work. Family is quite far from my life plans at the moment ... very far. As the situation is now, I would choose my job as the most important thing in my life because I don't trust family but if there is a moment that I am very in love with somebody and I love my husband very much, and I have a child and a very good relationship... I don't know actually what I would say about priorities in my life ... but in the situation I am now, single... I'd say work is the priority for me...

R: So, do you think that it is possible to be quite happy with your career life, I mean to succeed in your career?

S: Yes, I cannot really be sure but what I see at the moment is the work, my work. At the same time it is also important to me to have a relationship. That's up to where I can see myself but not further than that. I don't think about family at the moment. I know that relationship is very important as well... but I don't want to rely on something I cannot reach actually. I can see the success in my job as something more likely to happen than a relationship.

R: What do you think is most important in a relationship or a family for you?



S: I think it is very important both of them to be at the same socio-economic level, so not to be jealous of the other or for there to be competition between them; not to want to dominate each other but to accept each other, to exist happily together. I think the most important thing in the relationship I shall have with my husband is for both of us to be responsible for our behaviour and feelings etc... to be determined to keep our relationship and our family intact ... It is a lesson I got from my parents, I want to keep in touch with my husband, you know ... my parents didn't manage to keep their family... to resolve their problems. I think if you think about these you can keep a family intact. But this thought happens sometimes for the sake of your emotional life, happiness. You may not want to live in a family with your husband or with your wife but you have to do that because you feel responsible for your family and your children, but I think it is important. It is a matter of willingness, like me I feel I am determined to do that, to succeed but if it doesn't happen... anyway...

S: R: What is most important for your friendships?

R: It is the same, to accept the other as s/he is, to try not to be competitive to the other, not to be jealous of him or her, not to want to dominate in the relationship, to accept yourself and the other as well.

R: About your work what is most important?

S: I think it is most important to trust yourself, to be confident, but to leave space for the others, not to be egocentric, to listen to others and follow their opinions if they are right. Not to rush into something, to be very careful about whatever you do.

R: About leisure, what is most important for you?

S: Not, to have too much and to be selective about leisure, the kind and the quality of enjoyment you have.

R: What is most possible for you to happen in your family?

S: I never had a long relationship, so I don't know how it is going to be .. but I heard about and I believe that it is difficult to find the balance, to find the breaking point... From my perspective what is more likely to happen is not to get on with the person you are going to get married to... let's say that the one likes the other and they are in love... this will not be the case after 2 or 3 years because they will get bored. The situation is always like that: the ones you want are not available and they possibly do not like you and you are attractive to those people you don't like... so you will never find the right man... so you get married because of being quite old and one of these relationships ends in marriage not because of being the best one but because of the time, this is something you have to do in our society... it's a matter of timing, actually. I don't know, I may be in love with somebody and I may get married in one year...

R: About your friendships, what do you think that it is most possible for you?

S: Friendships always change but there are two or three for example that are for ever but .... I think it is very difficult to keep friends for ever... but it happens to many people being friends from early years of their life until being very old... but I think it is a

matter of having too many things in common, to have past experiences they share... these are the things I think that help to maintain a friendship for a long while.

R: About relationships with colleagues and your occupation, what do you think is possible for you in the future?

S: I know that I am quite straightforward and a sort of authoritative personality, so I think that it is possible to have people who love me and people who hate me around. I think that I am the kind of person who makes the others to feel either love or hostility towards me, I don't think of anyone having indifferent feeling for me. I think I shall struggle in my occupational environment but I don't know whether I shall succeed or not.

R: About your leisure time what do you think might be happening in the future?

S: I think I'll always go out with friends until late in the night.

R: How capable do you feel to do all these, I mean basically about your family life, career, relationships?

S: I know that I can do all of them. But for my personal life ... I don't know... I am not very capable of succeeding in my personal life... it's a matter of emotional stability.. and I'm afraid that I am going to lose it because of my family story about divorce and things like that... things do not depend on me, so I don't control the situation perfectly.. the other part is also in the game; consequently, it isn't very clear whether I am going to get on well in my family situation. Losing my emotional stability is my biggest fear, you know being emotionally disturbed. I haven't mentioned up to now. I am afraid of losing it, if you lose this stability you lose everything.

R: Which one of all these you feel more capable of doing in the future?

S: The work, the career, because I believe that family is very difficult ... it is very difficult to succeed in a family, to be in a family. I am quite worried about it. But overall, I can say that I am capable of succeeding in all these only if I am OK in a good emotional state, I know that I am fine, capable of all of these. However, there are many days that I am not in a good mood, in a good emotional state. Now, for example I feel quite capable but I don't know about tomorrow..

R: Which one of all these things you perceive as most likely to come true?

S: I don't know, I have no idea, all of them fifty-fifty. What I don't feel quite sure about is family. Job is what I believe depends on me, about families you know that the other partner is also in the game, so, I don't have control, absolute control... in work it is better, I don't have everything under my control but I control situations more than in family situation, it is fifty-fifty in families.

R: Until now have you done anything about making any of these come true, any plans?

S: Yes, what makes me quite confident about all these, I mean the work, is that I feel that I have done some things about it. I don't believe that I have taken big steps on that but I believe that I am on the right path. I have not made a dramatic step forward I but feel that I am going to the right direction.



R: Have you made any plans about your life?

S: I don't think that I can organise things in my personal life. I get into a relationship instinctively or I don't get involved in relationships at all. This is the true actually, I don't get involved easily in relationships. There is something wrong here that I haven't grasped it yet. I am very confused on my personal life I do not know what happens really.

R: Have you organised things with your friendships?

S: Some years ago I was getting involved in these relationships following my emotions, impulsively, but now I try to remind myself that there is not unconditional love and unconditional friendship and that even the most close friendships is a matter of handling situations... and it is possible to have bad moments in these friendships and I always try to remember that and to see things from a realistic perspective, to be as realistic as possible.

R: How much would you like all these things to come true? which one?

S: I want work and family a great deal. Family cannot be a substitute for work and work cannot be a substitute for family. Family is not enough for me, I cannot stay at home, taking care of my children I would not do that very well if I did not work... I need the balance between family and career. I perceive both of them as very important, the one helps the other to work better. Family helps you to work, if you have many interests then family is not enough.

R: How much would you like these to come true?

S: Very much these are what I want, a good job and a good family, as everybody else I think.

R: Are you satisfied with what you have done until now about all these, with regard to the work?

S: I could have done worse and I could have done better. I delayed my studies here for about 2 or 3 years after I finished the secondary school. I did not delay actually I did my A levels. I did not have a positive image of myself as a student so, when I went to the University, Sussex University I did absolutely nothing during the 2 and half years, I also took a year off. I am very bitter about that but I had to do that. I started to be a 'real' student actually only in the last five months. This is something that makes me feeling sad and I know that I could learn so many things that could help me now and I am also sad for not getting involved with the media studies earlier in my life but I did not have the time actually. I had other problems to resolve and I couldn't think too much about work and my future. If you asked me about my work during those years I would give you the answer I give now about work, this means I had no idea about what I was going to do, but I saved my occupational life, I think it is OK now. I am on the right road, I am a real student now, as I wanted to be during those years.

R: Are you satisfied with your personal life, with what you have done in your personal life?



S: No, I am not satisfied at all.. I'm, single and I feel lonely. I was always single as far as I remember myself except some small periods of time when I had a boyfriend but these relationships were short-time ones... not more than two or three months. This is something I'm concerned about... I'm not satisfied with my personal life but I try to be optimistic otherwise it will drive me crazy.

R: How do you feel at the moment about all these, if they come true?

S: I have a positive point of view for my future, I think this will be positive for me, very positive. But you have to see all these in comparison to how I used to see these aspects of life some years ago. This positive way of thinking was not the case some years ago. This positive way of thinking is something I have recently adopted, I mean very recently, in the last two years and I struggled very hard to make myself have this positive way of thinking.

R: How do you see your future if all these come true?

S: Nice, good, happy. I know that there are always problems..

R: What's the worst think that could happen in your career?

S: To fail, none of what I am planning to do to come true, all these to be just dreams for me. I could not bear to see these dreams being deflated like a balloon, and to fall on the floor. I am afraid that all these will not come true. I am not sure at all about myself.

R: Do you think that you are capable of succeeding in that or that there is something that makes failure possible?

S: No, I think that if I fail I shall be myself in one sense responsible for that but it will be also related to other factors like luck, good handling of the situation etc. But ... yes, may be yes... if you think quite carefully about that ... it is that I may make some mistakes. But you cannot control everything. Luck, yes.. that's the word, you know there are factors you cannot control, especially in Media; media is a very demanding occupational area. How can you trust yourself? It is the kind of work that needs people to be very skilful, I have not tried yet, I don't know how difficult it is going to be I have not got involved in that yet. You know I want to work for the TV. That's my place, that's what I want to do. I could do whatever at the beginning in Media in order to get a better job, later on... by the passage of time. I'd like very much to do political documentaries for the TV, I'd like to have authority over what it is going to be presented on the TV. But all these are so distant from me at this time.

R: What do you think is the worst thing that might happen in your family?

S: To have a traumatic experience, to have a traumatic break up, and things like that, to be just me and my child and my nerves having gone into pieces and things like that.

R: About relationships with others and friendships what do you think that would be the worst thing that could happen to you?

S: I never think about the worst thing that could possibly happen but the worst thing that could happen to my friendships is to stop being friends with people with whom I have had a good friendship for many years. This could be a challenge to myself.

APPENDIX C

AGE: .....  
GENDER:.....  
OCCUPATION: .....  
NATIONALITY: .....  
FATHER'S OCCUPATION: .....  
MOTHER'S OCCUPATION: .....  
FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL:.....  
MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL:.....  
CURRENT MARITAL STATUS:  
MARRIED     SINGLE     DIVORCED     (CROSS OUT AS APPROPRIATE)

AGE WHEN YOUR PARENTS WERE DIVORCED: .....  
AGE WHEN YOUR CUSTODIAL PARENT REMARRIED: .....  
AGE WHEN YOUR CUSTODIAL PARENT STARTED LIVING WITH A  
PERMANENT PARTNER.....  
AGE WHEN YOUR CUSTODIAL PARENT STARTED DATING:.....  
AGE WHEN YOUR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT REMARRIED:.....  
AGE WHEN YOUR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT STARTED DATING:.....  
AGE WHEN YOUR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT STARTED LIVING WITH A  
PERMANENT PARTNER.....  
HOW MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE YOUR PARENTS FINAL  
SEPARATION?.....



Divorce questionnaire

This study focuses on the long term effects of divorce on individuals whose parents are divorced.

Please try to think back to the period when your parents were getting divorced and answer the following questions. Put a tick next to the answer that refer to your case. There are no right and wrong answers.

If you do not remember much about your parents divorce because of being very young when it happened please write "don't remember" next to the questions for which you have no memories.

If you answer the questions on the basis of information provided by others please indicate that in each answer where you use that information. Please, also indicate the relationship you have with the people the information comes from. There is space under each question for this information to be included.

Pre-divorce family situation

1. I remember good times with my family.

Many [ ]

Few [ ]

None [ ]

2. I remember my parents being happy together.

Always [ ]

For many years [ ]

For the first few years, about..... years

Almost never [ ]

I don't remember [ ]

3. My parents were not happy, as far as I can remember because

of financial problems [ ]

personal problems [ ]

(if yes, mention some of them. )

.....

.....

.....

.....

of everyday hassles [ ]

their personalities clashed [ ]

Other.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Post-divorce family life.

Child-custodial parent relationship

4. Immediately after the divorce I had conflicts with the parent I lived with

very often [ ]      often [ ]      rarely [ ]      almost never [ ]

5. Immediately after the divorce my relationship with the parent I lived with was

very good [ ]      quite good [ ]      not too bad [ ]      bad [ ]

(Answer the following questions only if you think that they apply to you)

6. I have always had

very good [ ]      quite good [ ]      not too bad [ ]      bad [ ]  
relationships with the parent I was living with.

7. My relationship with the parent I was living with deteriorated during .....

- for about ..... years
- always, until now.

(Please, fill in the blanks)

8. My relationship with the parent I was living with improved during .....

- for about .....years
- until now is still improving.

(Please, fill in the blanks)

9. I usually had conflicts with the parent I was living with about  
every day things

my relationship with my non-custodial parent

my personal life

her/ his possessiveness

his/her relationship with his/her partner/ new spouse

his/ her relationship with my non-custodial parent

my relationship with her/his partner

Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Yes [ ]	No [ ]

(Please, put a tick next to the answer that represent you most. You can put more than one tick)

10. We had financial problems during the period I lived with one of my parents.

Yes [ ]      No [ ] (if NO go to the next section)

11. The parent I lived with after the divorce  
started working after the divorce because of financial problems  
had been supported by

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12a. Financial difficulties:  
created conflicts among the members of the family as it was constructed after the divorce Yes [ ] No [ ]  
created a charged family atmosphere Yes [ ] No [ ]  
did not influence our life Yes [ ] No [ ]  
created serious difficulties in my own life Yes [ ] No [ ]

12b. if yes describe some of them: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(Please, put a tick next to the answer that represents you most. You can tick more than one answer)

13. The financial problems lasted for  
13a/ a short time.....years  
13b/ a long time.....years  
13c/ until now

(Please, fill in the blanks)

**Child step-parent relationship (a person married to the custodial parent)**

14. After my parents' divorce, the parent I was living with remarried.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]  
If yes how long was this after the divorce?.....

15. After the divorce the parent I was living with had a live in partner  
Yes [ ] No [ ]  
If yes how long was this after the divorce?.....

16. The relationship between my step-father/mother and myself is  
very good[ ] pretty good [ ] not too bad [ ] bad [ ]

17. In the beginning the relationship I had with him/her was:  
very good [ ] pretty good [ ] not too bad [ ] bad [ ]

18. Eventually it became  
very good [ ] pretty good [ ] not too bad [ ] bad [ ]



(Answer the following questions only if you think that they apply to you)

19. The relationship between my step-father and myself has always been  
very good[ ]      pretty good [ ]      not too bad [ ]      bad [ ]

20. My relationship with my step-parent deteriorated during.....  
.....  
    -for about ..... years  
    -until now.

(Please, fill in the blanks)

21. My relationship with my step-parent improved during .....  
.....  
    -for about ..... years  
    -until now.

(Please, fill in the blanks)

22. S/he (the spouse of my custodial parent) had a  
    positive [ ]      negative [ ]      no influence [ ] on my life.

23. I talk with him/her like a friend.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

24. I trust him/her a lot.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

25. S/he was quite abusive towards me as a child      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

26. S/he ignored me.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

27. S/he did not spend time with me      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

28. S/he disliked me.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

29. S/he was jealous of me because of the relationship I had with my custodial parent.  
    Yes [ ]      No [ ]

30. I treated him/her as a family member      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

31. S/he moved in with his/her children      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

If yes answer the following questions:

    32. S/he had time only for them      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

    33. S/he loved only her/his children      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

    34. S/he treated us equally      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

35. My relationship with my step-brothers and/or sisters was  
    Very good [ ]      quite good [ ]      indifferent [ ]      quite bad [ ]      bad [ ]

36a. S/he had children from a previous marriage      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

36b. S/he had been married before      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

**Child/ non-custodial parent relationship.**

37. My relationship with my non-custodial parent is  
very good[ ]      quite good[ ]      indifferent[ ]      quite bad[ ]      bad[ ]

38. I miss him/her when I haven't seen him/her for a long while.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
39. In the beginning my relationship with my non residential parent was  
very good [ ] quite good[ ] not too bad[ ] bad [ ]
40. Eventually it became:  
very good [ ] quite good [ ] not too bad [ ] bad [ ]

(Answer the following questions only if you think that they apply to you)

41. My relationship with my non-custodial parent has always been  
very good [ ] quite good [ ] not too bad [ ] bad [ ]
42. My relationship with my non-custodial parent deteriorated during.....  
.....  
-for about .....years  
-until now.
43. My relationship with my non-custodial parent improved during.....  
.....  
-for about .....years  
-until now.

(Please, fill in the blanks)

- |   |         |        |
|---|---------|--------|
| 44. The conflicts with my non-custodial parent usually related to |         |        |
| everyday things   | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |
| my relationship with my custodial parent                          | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |
| my personal life  | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |
| his/her possessiveness of me                                      | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |
| his/her relationship with his partner/ new spouse                 | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |
| his/her relationship with my custodial parent                     | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |
| my relationship with his/her partner                              | Yes [ ] | No [ ] |

45. I do not feel as if I belong in the same family with the parent I don't live with anymore.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
46. I don't want to live with her/him in the future  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
47. We have almost nothing in common  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
48. I don't enjoy her/his company  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
49. She/he ignores me  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
50. S/he has rarely shown interest in me.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
51. S/he demonstrates his/her love  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
52. Our relationship is all about finance  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
53. S/he is interested in my life and my problems.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
54. S/he takes an active interest in my life  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
55. Other .....  
.....

Visiting-contact

56. I keep in touch with my non-custodial parent:

We ring each other	Yes [ ]	No [ ]
We visit each other	Yes [ ]	No [ ]
We go out together	Yes [ ]	No [ ]
Other.....		

.....

.....

57. Immediately after the divorce I visited him/her

very often [ ]	quite often [ ]	rarely [ ]	almost never [ ]
----------------	-----------------	------------	------------------

58. Nowadays, I visit him/her

very often [ ]	quite often [ ]	rarely [ ]	almost never [ ]
----------------	-----------------	------------	------------------

Answer the following two questions only if you gave a negative answer to questions 57 & 58.

59. We don't visit each other but we keep contact by (report ways of contact).....

.....

.....

.....

60. I visit him/her rarely because:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Child's relationship with the partner of the non-custodial parent

Please answer the following questions with regard to the new partner of your non-custodial parent.

61. After my parents' divorce, the parent I was not living with remarried.

Yes [ ]	No [ ]
---------	--------

If Yes how long was it after the divorce?.....

62. After divorce the parent I was not living with began living with a partner

Yes [ ]	No [ ]
---------	--------

If Yes how long was it after the divorce?.....



(Answer the following questions only if they apply to you)

63. The relationship between the partner of the parent I was not living with have always been

Very good [ ]      pretty good [ ]      not too bad [ ]      bad [ ]

64. The relationship with the partner of my non-custodial parent (him/her) and me started as  
very good [ ]      pretty good [ ]      not too bad [ ]      bad [ ]

65. and eventually it became  
very good [ ]      pretty good [ ]      not too bad [ ]      bad [ ]

66. The relationship with the partner of the parent I was not living with and myself became bad during.....  
-for about ..... years  
-until now.

(please, fill in the blanks)

67. My relationship with the partner of the parent I was living with became better during  
.....  
-for about ..... years  
- until now.

(please, fill in the blanks)

68. S/he (the partner of the non-custodial parent) had a  
positive [ ]      negative [ ]      no influence[ ]      in my life.

69. I trust him/her a lot.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

70. I talk with him/her like a friend.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

71. S/he was quite abusive towards me as a child      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

72. S/he ignored me.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

73. S/he did not spend his/her time with me      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

74. S/he disliked me.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

75. S/he was jealous of me because of the relationship I had with my non-custodial parent.  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

76. My relationship with my step-brothers and sisters from my custodial parent's remarriage was

Very good [ ]      quite good [ ]      indifferent [ ]      quite bad [ ]      bad [ ]

77. S/he moved in with his/her children.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

If yes answer the following questions:

78. S/he had time only for them      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

79. S/he loved only her/his children      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

80. S/he treated us equally      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

81. My relationship with my step-brothers and sisters from my non-custodial parent's remarriage was

Very good [ ]      quite good [ ]      indifferent [ ]      quite bad [ ]      bad [ ]

82a. S/he had children from previous marriage      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

82b. S/he had been married before      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Child's involvement in the parents' divorce

83. I remember being present when my parents had arguments  
very often [ ]      quite often [ ]      rarely [ ]      never [ ]

84. I remember passing messages from one parent to the other  
very often [ ]      quite often [ ]      rarely [ ]      never [ ]

85. My parents asked me to take sides in the divorce process.  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

86. My parents tried to set their children against each other by blaming each other .  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

87. My mother/father asked for my opinion about his/her decision to file for a divorce.  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

(Cross out according to which of your parents asked for your opinion. If this is the case for both your parents please underline both words: mother and father)

88. I was pressured to get involved in the legal process.      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

89. I was asked by my mother to behave in a certain way towards my father.  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

If Yes answer the following question

90. What were you asked to do?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

91. I was asked by my father to behave in a certain way towards my mother.  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

If Yes answer the following question

92. What were you asked to do?.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
.....

93. I was asked to agree with my mother's account of the divorce.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]

94. I was asked to agree with my father's account of the divorce.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]

95. I was asked to approve of my mother's attitudes and decisions.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]

96. I was asked to approve of my father's attitudes and decisions.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]

97. Report any other ways you were involved in your parents' divorce; if there are any  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

98. I was asked to live in two different places.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes answer the following question

99. What pattern of life did you have? (Please report the time you spent with each of them, feelings etc.)  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Support

100. During the period of the divorce I had professional support.  
Yes [ ] No [ ]

(if you gave a positive answer to question 100 answer the next one, otherwise go to question 102)





Information provided to you about the divorce

111. How was the question of your parents divorce raised in your life?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

112. Were you aware of the fact that there was something wrong in your parents' relationship?  
(Please tick the answer that applies most to you- you may need to tick more than one answer)

There was nothing to make me think of divorce before it happened	[ ]
I had never imagined that my parents would get divorced	[ ]
I knew that they did not get on very well but I never thought of divorce	[ ]
I knew that both of them wanted to get divorced because they talked about their conflicts	[ ]
I suddenly realised that I was going to live with only one of my parents	[ ]
I perceived our family life as normal and had no clue that something bad was happening	[ ]
Other .....	
.....	

113. I was informed about the divorce by my mother	[ ]
my father	[ ]
mother's partner (or step-father)	[ ]
father's partner (or step-mother)	[ ]
Others.....	
.....	
.....	

(Please, tick the answer most applies to you. You may need to tick more than one answer)

114. I had the chance to talk my parents' divorce through with

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

115. In general I have been told very few things about the divorce because:

My parents avoided discussing it

I did not want to know about it.

Other.....

.....

.....

.....

Parental relationship after divorce

116. At the beginning my parents met each other  
very often [ ]      pretty often [ ]      rarely [ ]      almost never [ ]

117. Nowadays they meet each other  
very often [ ]      pretty often [ ]      rarely [ ]      almost never [ ]

118. Their relationship after the divorce was  
friendly[ ]    formal (e.g. for financial reasons)[ ]      bad (conflicts)[ ]

119. After the divorce my parents had conflicts  
immediately after the divorce (for about .....months/years)  
for a long period (for about.....months/years)  
until now  
(please fill in the blanks)

120. The causes of the conflicts were:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Reasons for divorce

121. The reason(s) my parents could not live together anymore was (were):  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



Parents' volatile personal life

122. My parents had a volatile relationship. They separated many times.  
Yes[ ] No[ ]
123. How old you were when they separated for first time?.....  
124. for second?.....  
.....
125. My parents had affairs during their marriage Yes[ ] No[ ]
126. My parents had moments of passionate love and moments when they hated each other . Yes[ ] No[ ]
127. Other?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(Answer the following two questions only if they apply to you)

128. The parent I lived with (father/mother) got married more than once after the divorce.  
Yes[ ] No[ ]
129. How many times?.....  
.....
130. Did you live with him/her during that period? Yes[ ] No[ ]
- 131a. How old you were when each of these marriages took place?  
The first one?.....
- 131b. The second one? .....  
Other?.....
132. Did you get on well with the first partner of your custodial parent?  
Yes[ ] No[ ]
133. the second? Yes[ ] No[ ]
134. the third? Yes[ ] No[ ]  
.....  
.....
135. The parent I did not live with (mother/father) got married more than once after the divorce.  
Yes [ ] No[ ]
136. How many times?.....
137. Did you live with him/her during that period? Yes[ ] No[ ]

138. How old you were when each of these marriages happened? .....

139. Did you get on well with the first partner of your non-custodial parent?

140. the second? Yes[ ] No[ ]  
141. the third? Yes[ ] No[ ]

142. After separation the parent I lived with had different partners s/he lived with.

Yes[ ] No[ ]

143. If Yes how old you were when s/he was living with a partner for the first time?.....

144. the second time?.....

145. After the separation the parent I did not live with had different partners s/he lived with.

Yes[ ] No[ ]

146. If Yes how old you were when s/he was living with a partner for the first time?.....

147. the second time?.....

### Child's movement from one parent to another

148. I did not spend the period after separation with only one parent. I moved several times

Yes[ ] No[ ]

149. 1<sup>st</sup>. from .....to ..... when I was .....years old, I was living with my mother/father for .....days/ months/ years.

2<sup>nd</sup> from.....to ..... when I was ..... years old, I was living with my mother/father for .....days/ months/ years.

3<sup>rd</sup> from .....to ..... when I was ..... years old, I was living with my mother/father for .....days/ months/ years.

from .....to ..... when I was ..... years old, I was living with my mother/father for .....days/ months/ years.

from.....to ..... when I was ..... years old, I was living with my mother/father for .....days/ months/ years.

(Please, fill in the blanks and cross out as appropriate)

150. I had to visit the parent I was not living with  
formally for some hours  
to spend some days with him/her periodically  
Other.....

Yes [ ]      No [ ]  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

.....  
.....  
.....

(If you answer yes to the second question, or if some similar situation happened to you, with respect to the contact you had with your non-custodial parent please answer the following three questions)

151. I liked moving from house to house  
152. I was not very happy with moving from house to house, I wished to avoid that.  
153. I hated moving from house to house

Yes [ ]      No [ ]  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]



### Possible selves questionnaire

This questionnaire is connected with people's perceptions of themselves in the future. It is focused on the following:

- family life ( your own family life, either present or future, not the family life experienced with your parents)
- friendships
- career
- leisure

As you are answering the questions try to think of yourself in the future in each of these aspects of your life.

Some of the statements might describe exactly how you feel or see yourself in the future. Others may do so to a lesser extent. Please, put a circle around the number next to each statement according to the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

I strongly disagree = 1

I disagree = 2

I mildly disagree = 3

I mildly agree = 4

I agree = 5

I strongly agree = 6

- 
1. I do not see any reason why I should be unhappy in the future in my family.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  2. Friendships always change. They are not permanent.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  3. I like to spend my leisure time in social activities.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  4. I don't think that I'll ever be sufficiently sure of somebody to get married to him/her.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  5. I won't allow myself to be dominated by my spouse. I will attempt to keep my own way of life.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  6. I prefer to spend my leisure time with friends.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  7. I think that people can be happy with family life.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  8. I am not interested in making friends at work.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
  9. I think that there are interesting people at work with whom I can become friends.  
1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6

I strongly disagree = 1  
I disagree = 2  
I mildly disagree = 3  
I mildly agree = 4  
I agree = 5  
I strongly agree = 6

---

10. Relationships with partners go wrong for reasons you cannot predict or prevent. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
11. I socialise with people quite different from myself. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
12. I like spending my leisure time doing things on my own. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
13. People who are determined to have a happy family life will do so. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
14. I don't like to get very close to people quickly, because I want to be perfectly sure of them. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
15. It is very difficult to trust somebody to be your permanent partner in life. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
16. For me success in a job is basically a matter of persistence and organisation. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
17. I doubt that deep relationships, on which I can rely, can exit. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
18. Nowadays, choosing a partner for the rest of your life is a risky business. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
19. I have to select my friends carefully. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
20. I haven't managed to be in a happy relationship with a partner until now. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
21. I usually feel very close to my friends. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
22. It is difficult to meet the right person with whom to share your life; however, I trust my partner and believe in him/her. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
23. I don't have the qualities to get on in my chosen occupation. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
24. I like making new friends and socialising with other people. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6

- I strongly disagree = 1
  - I disagree = 2
  - I mildly disagree = 3
  - I mildly agree = 4
  - I agree = 5
  - I strongly agree = 6
- 

25. I can't rely on friendships because they do not last for ever.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
26. I think that people have to try to get close to each other in order to be happy in their personal life.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
27. I don't let myself get too close to my friends.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
28. Occupational relationships change from day to day.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
29. I cannot say whether I will have good or bad relationships with my colleagues because human relationships are very volatile.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
30. I am confident that if you work at a relationship with a partner it will be successful.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
31. I am able to compromise if necessary in my married life.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
32. People who believe in themselves and want to have a good personal life will succeed in doing so.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
33. It is unlikely that a marriage will last for ever. Divorce is a definite possibility.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
34. I will not allow myself to do jobs which are different from those I have planned.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
35. I don't feel that I am capable of having a happy family life.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
36. Relationships I may have with colleagues will change day to day depending on their behaviour towards me.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
37. I don't think that people are capable of controlling their family life, especially their relationship with their partner.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6
38. I don't think of myself getting divorced in the future.1\_\_2\_\_3\_\_4\_\_5\_\_6



- I strongly disagree = 1
  - I disagree = 2
  - I mildly disagree = 3
  - I mildly agree = 4
  - I agree = 5
  - I strongly agree = 6
- 

- \*39. I behave so as to avoid the mistakes that my parents made during their married life.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 40. I wouldn't take a job where I would have to cope with colleagues envy because of competition.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 41. I am not happy with the kind of relationships I have had with partners.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 42. I often think of divorce as a possibility in my future life.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 43. I don't believe that it is possible for people to make friends in their occupational environments.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 44. Being part of a family is a major priority in my life.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- \*45. Keeping in min my parents mistakes will protect me from an unhappy marital life.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 47. Poor communication in marriage can lead to divorce.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 48. I am very satisfied with my personal life with partners.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 49. Having a career is the main priority in my life.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 51. I think of myself as having an ideal family life.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 52. I like to think that my married life is going to be excellent. I think that I will be an ideal husband/wife.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 53. I think that I will be an ideal husband/wife.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
- 54. I think that people are capable of making a contribution to their family happiness.  
1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6

\* Answer these questions in the case they apply to you (if you think that your parents made mistakes in their marital life). Otherwise, go to the next question.

I strongly disagree = 1  
I disagree = 2  
I mildly disagree = 3  
I mildly agree = 4  
I agree = 5  
I strongly agree = 6

---

55. I think I'm going to be an ideal husband/wife. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
56. I hate occupational environments where colleagues are antagonistic towards each other. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
57. I will try to protect my children, even if this means being overprotective. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
58. I feel perfectly capable of having a happy family life in the future. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
60. Overprotection is something that protects children from bad experiences. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
61. I am afraid of not being able to cope with everything I am expected to do in my work. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
62. I am going to protect my children as far as I can although I know that I may not be the best way to bring them up. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
63. I would like to have a family, but if I don't I can still be happy in other life situations. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
64. I think that I can learn from the mistakes my parents made in their married life. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
65. I prefer spending my leisure time alone rather than with friends. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
66. I will try to communicate effectively in my relationship with my partner-spouse. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
67. I would like to find the right balance between career and family. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
68. I would work in other jobs if it was necessary before pursuing the career that I really want. 1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6

- I strongly disagree = 1
  - I disagree = 2
  - I mildly disagree = 3
  - I mildly agree = 4
  - I agree = 5
  - I strongly agree = 6
- 

69. I don't want to have a family.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
70. I think that my future personal life with a partner will be happy.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
71. Having a family is the main priority in my life.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
72. I am ambitious in relation to my career.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
73. I do not feel confident that I will succeed in my future family life.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
74. I think that friendships are a very important part of our lives.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
75. I shall take care of my children as much as possible as, even if I overprotect them.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
76. Friends have frequently played an important part in my life.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
77. Reaching the top of my occupation is not very important for me.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
78. I don't want to sacrifice my career for my family.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
79. I cannot see myself working in a highly competitive environment.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
80. I think a career is what I want most in my life.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
81. Friendships are risky for me.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
82. I have criteria that people must meet in order for me to socialise with them.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
83. Career success is something that depends to a great extent on factors you cannot control.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6
84. I don't feel confident of controlling my relationship with my partner in the future.

1\_\_ 2\_\_ 3\_\_ 4\_\_ 5\_\_ 6



I strongly disagree = 1  
I disagree = 2  
I mildly disagree = 3  
I mildly agree = 4  
I agree = 5  
I strongly agree = 6

---

85. In your career it is likely that you will experience situations you cannot change. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
86. You cannot control your relationship with your partner. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
87. I easily accept people as friends. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
88. I think people can work to achieve happiness within their family life. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
89. I think of friends as very important in my life. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
90. I can see myself in a relationship but not getting married. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
91. Making new friends is a difficult process for me. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
92. I still have the friends I made many years ago. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
93. I am happy with the relationships with partners I have been in. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
94. I think if somebody is determined to get something s/he can get it. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
95. I think it is important for people to keep their own space in their life even if they are married. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
96. I cannot imagine myself doing a different job to the one I am doing or training for. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
97. I usually relate to people easily in making new friends. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
98. I think people have to share their lives with their partner in order to have a happy family life. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6
99. A successful career is one of the priorities in my life. 1\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_ 6

100. If a had to choose between career and family I would prefer to have a successful  
career life family life  
because:..... because:.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

101. The thing that is most important in my life is
- to be at peace with myself ☐
  - to have a quite and simple life ☐
  - my well-being ☐
  - my family ☐
  - my career ☐
  - Other.....

*(put a tick next to the ones that best express how you feel. You can put more than one tick. If so put them in order (give numbers) according to how important they are for you).*

PLEASE MAKE SURE AND CHECK THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS!  
THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THIS RESEARCH.  
THANK YOU.

**APPENDIX D**

**Pearson’s correlation coefficients for the questions consisting the variables of the study.**  
(The questions in bold indicate the ‘key’ questions)

*Possible selves regarding future relationships with friends*

Friends 1/ undemanding in friendships	Q19
Q82	.4478      p= .000      (N=324)

Friends.2/ readily involved in friendships	Q91	Q24	Q97
Q87	.4271      p= .000 (N=324)	.3431      p=.000 (N=324)	.4092      p= .000 (N=324)
Q91		.3899      p=.000 (N=325)	.5116      p =.000 (N=325)
Q24			.4596      p=.000 (N=325)

Friends 3/ prepared to be committed to friends	Q81	Q25
Q17	.4413      p= .000      (N=323)	.5267      p= .000      (N=324)
Q81		.3548      p= .000      (N=323)

Friends 4/ making close relationships with friends	Q21	Q74	Q76
Q89	.4612      p= .000 (N=324)	.5739      p= .000 (N=323)	.6315      p= .000 (N=323)
Q21		.3265      p= .000 (N=323)	.4696      p= .000 (N=323)
Q74			.5306      p= .000      (N=323)



Friends 5/ Permanently involved in friendships	Q27	Q2
Q25	.4701 p= .000 (N=324)	.4567 p= .000 (N= 324)
Q27		.3605 p= .000 (N=324)

*Possible selves regarding future career*

Career 1/ ambitious	Q99	Q77	Q79
Q72	.5198 p= .000 (N=323)	.4810 p= .000 (N=323)	.4103 p= .000 (N=323)
Q99		.4297 p= .000 (N=323)	.3469 p= .000 (N=323)
Q77			.3954 p= .000 (N=323)

Career 3/ focused on a particular occupation	Q96
Q34	.4955 p= .000 (N=323)

*Possible selves regarding future relationships with colleagues*

Career 2/ Open to socialising with colleagues	Q8
Q9	.4053 p= .000 (N=157)

Career 4/ stable/consistent in relationships with colleagues	Q28	Q29
Q36	.4178 p= .000 (N=324)	.4063 p= .000 (N=324)
Q28		.3942 p= .000 (N=324)

**PAGE  
NUMBERING  
AS ORIGINAL**

Family 2/ optimistic about relationships	Q4	Q7	Q15	Q18	Q33	Q35	Q37	Q38	Q42	Q58	Q70	Q73	Q84	Q86	Q88	Q90
Q1	.3232 p=.000 (N=325)	.3926 p=.000 (N=325)	.1473 p=.000 (N=325)	.2930 p=.000 (N=325)	.3479 p=.000 (N=325)	.3845 p=.000 (N=324)	.2044 p=.000 (N=324)	.1722 p=.000 (N=325)	.2311 p=.000 (N=325)	.4671 p=.000 (N=324)	.4157 p=.000 (N=324)	.3767 p=.000 (N=324)	.3184 p=.000 (N=325)	.2444 p=.000 (N=325)	.2813 p=.000 (N=325)	.2626 p=.000 (N=325)
Q4		.3953 p=.000 (N=325)	.4165 p=.000 (N=325)	.4154 p=.000 (N=325)	.3997 p=.000 (N=325)	.3702 p=.000 (N=324)	.3825 p=.000 (N=325)	.3542 p=.000 (N=325)	.2874 p=.000 (N=325)	.3075 p=.000 (N=324)	.3669 p=.000 (N=324)	.2740 p=.000 (N=324)	.3545 p=.000 (N=325)	.2550 p=.000 (N=325)	.3247 p=.000 (N=325)	.3883 p=.000 (N=325)
Q7			.2795 p=.000 (N=325)	.1975 p=.000 (N=325)	.3378 p=.000 (N=325)	.3705 p=.000 (N=324)	.2788 p=.000 (N=324)	.3568 p=.000 (N=325)	.2437 p=.000 (N=325)	.4800 p=.000 (N=325)	.4000 p=.000 (N=324)	.2541 p=.000 (N=324)	.2353 p=.000 (N=325)	.2876 p=.000 (N=325)	.3276 p=.000 (N=325)	.3390 p=.000 (N=325)
Q15				.5100 p=.000 (N=325)	.3679 p=.000 (N=325)	.3301 p=.000 (N=324)	.3714 p=.000 (N=324)	.2363 p=.000 (N=325)	.2615 p=.000 (N=325)	.2176 p=.000 (N=324)	.2619 p=.000 (N=324)	.2435 p=.000 (N=324)	.2400 p=.000 (N=325)	.2203 p=.000 (N=325)	.2684 p=.000 (N=325)	.2420 p=.000 (N=325)
Q18					.4014 p=.000 (N=325)	.2778 p=.000 (N=324)	.3910 p=.000 (N=325)	.2203 p=.000 (N=325)	.2515 p=.000 (N=325)	.2387 p=.000 (N=324)	.3199 p=.000 (N=325)	.3329 p=.000 (N=325)	.3665 p=.000 (N=325)	.3340 p=.000 (N=325)	.2438 p=.000 (N=325)	.2940 p=.000 (N=325)
Q33						.4290 p=.000 (N=324)	.4179 p=.000 (N=324)	.3866 p=.000 (N=325)	.4567 p=.000 (N=325)	.3704 p=.000 (N=324)	.3569 p=.000 (N=324)	.3626 p=.000 (N=325)	.4190 p=.000 (N=325)	.3356 p=.000 (N=325)	.3199 p=.000 (N=325)	.4556 p=.000 (N=325)
Q35							.3220 p=.000 (N=324)	.2824 p=.000 (N=324)	.2409 p=.000 (N=324)	.4873 p=.000 (N=324)	.5101 p=.000 (N=323)	.4661 p=.000 (N=323)	.4454 p=.000 (N=324)	.2787 p=.000 (N=324)	.2979 p=.000 (N=324)	.3349 p=.000 (N=324)
Q37								.2075 p=.000 (N=324)	.2335 p=.000 (N=324)	.2376 p=.000 (N=324)	.2818 p=.000 (N=323)	.2374 p=.000 (N=323)	.3842 p=.000 (N=324)	.4439 p=.000 (N=324)	.3366 p=.000 (N=324)	.2944 p=.000 (N=324)



Family 2/ optimistic about relationships	Q4	Q7	Q15	Q18	Q33	Q35	Q37	Q38	Q42	Q58	Q70	Q73	Q84	Q86	Q88	Q90
Q38									.3903 p=.000 (N=325)	.3769 p=.000 (N=324)	.4083 p=.000 (N=324)	.1708 p=.002 (N=324)	.2409 p=.000 (N=325)	.2169 p=.000 (N=325)	.2817 p=.000 (N=325)	.4039 p=.000 (N=325)
Q42										.2518 p=.000 (N=324)	.2234 p=.000 (N=324)	.2194 p=.000 (N=324)	.2968 p=.000 (N=325)	.2566 p=.000 (N=325)	.2452 p=.000 (N=325)	.3020 p=.000 (N=325)
Q58											.6219 p=.000 (N=323)	.4405 p=.000 (N=323)	.4437 p=.000 (N=324)	.3279 p=.000 (N=324)	.3688 p=.000 (N=324)	.3397 p=.000 (N=324)
Q70												.4302 p=.000 (N=325)	.4782 p=.000 (N=324)	.3543 p=.000 (N=324)	.4125 p=.000 (N=324)	.3065 p=.000 (N=324)
Q73													.5050 p=.000 (N=324)	.2859 p=.000 (N=324)	.2881 p=.000 (N=324)	.3300 p=.000 (N=324)
Q84														.5486 p=.000 (N=325)	.2794 p=.000 (N=325)	.3124 p=.000 (N=325)
Q86															.2373 p=.000 (N=325)	.2039 p=.000 (N=325)
Q88																.2206 p=.000 (N=325)

Family 5/ highly protective towards children	Q60	Q62	Q75
Q57	.4994 p= .000 (N=324)	.5222 p= .000 (N=324)	.7089 p= .000 (N=324)
Q60		5.976 p= .000 (N=324)	.5471 p= .000 (N=324)
Q62			.5725 p= .000 (N=324)

Family 6/ Avoiding parental mistakes	Q45	Q39	Q66
Q64	..4662 p= .000 (N=324)	4248 p= .000 (N=272)	.4781 p= .000 (N=324)
Q45		.4281 p= .000 (N=263)	.2582 p= .000 (N=324)
Q39			.2599 p= .000 (N=324)

Possible selves regarding leisure activities

Leisure: orientation to social leisure activities	Q6	Q12	Q65
Q3	.4200 p= .000 (N= 325)	.2104 p=.000 (N=325)	.4391 p=.000 (N=324)
Q6		.2400 p= .000 (N=325)	.3630 p=.000 (N=324)
Q12			.4047 p=.000 (N=324)

**APPENDIX E**

**Table 1: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals regarding reasons of parental divorce.**

Question 3: My parents were not happy because	English(N=79 )	Greek (N=90)
Adultery	12 (15.2%)	11 (12.2%)
Financial problems	17 (21.5%)	19 (21.1%)
Father's traits(gambling, drinking, violent behaviour, not interested in family life)	16 (20.3%)	14 (15.6%)
Incompatibility	50 (63.3%)	50 (55.6%)
Can't remember	8 (10.1%)	13 (14.4%)

**Table 2: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding rare contact they kept with their non-custodial parent.**

Question 55 and 60: I visited my custodial parent rarely because of :	English(N=79)	Greek(N=90)
Objective reasons (distance, death)	25 31.6%	25 27.8%
Mutual lack of concern	15 19%	13 14.4%

**Table 3: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding themselves keeping a close relationship with their non-custodial parents.**

Question 56: I keep in touch with my noon custodial parent:	English(N=79)	Greek(N=90)
We have a very close relationship - personal contact	50 63.3%	51 56.7%

**Table 4: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding themselves keeping rare personal contact with their non-custodial parent.**

Question 59: I visit my non custodial parent rarely because:	English(N=79)	Greek(N=90)
We do not keep personal contact	17 21.5%	15 16.7%

**Table 5: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding being asked by their mothers (custodial parent) to keep a negative attitude towards their father (non-custodial parent).**

Question 90: I was asked by my mother to behave in certain ways towards my father:	English(N=79)	Greek(N=90)
Keep a negative attitude towards my father (blame him, not trust him)	8 10.1%	13 14.4%



Table 6: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding themselves being actively involved in parental divorce.

Question 92 and 97: Ways of involvement in parental divorce:			
	English(N=79)		Greek(N=90)
Active role (transferring messages, testify at the Court, trying to change each other's mind)	10	12.7%	13 14.4%

Table 7: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the person that helped them mostly to cope with parental divorce.

Question 106: The person that helped me mostly was:			
	English(N=79)		Greek(N=90)
Mother	15	19%	20 22.2%
Grandmother	13	16.5%	21 23.3%
Personal friends	10	12.7%	11 12.2%
<u>combined information:</u>			
friends of mine and family friends	11	14%	18 20%

Table 8: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the persons who supported them emotionally in order for them to cope with parental divorce.

Question 108: I had emotional support from:			
	English(N=79)		Greek(N=90)
Mother	16	20.3%	17 18.9%
Grands and siblings	17	21.5%	25 25.6%
Personal friends/ partner	17	21.5%	20 22.2%

Table 9: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding whether they were aware or not of the possibility of parental divorce and family disfunction.

Question 112: Were you aware of the fact that there was something wrong in your parents's relationships?			
	English(N=79)		Greek(N=90)
I was aware of that	17	21.5%	23 25.6%
I did not realise anything going wrong	49	62%	42 46.7%
It came up almost suddenly	24	30.4%	21 23.3%
I don't remember	5	7.6%	15 16.7%
<u>combined information:</u>			
There was nothing to make me thinking of divorce, before it happened and I suddenly realised that I was going to live with only one of my parents	14	18%	15 17%

Table 10: Frequencies of answers reported by English and Greek individuals, regarding the persons who informed them about the parental divorce.

Question 113: I was informed about the divorce by:			
	English(N=79)		Greek(N=90)
My mother	50	63.3%	57 63.3%
My father	14	17.7%	17 18.9%

Table 11: Frequencies of English and Greek individuals who reported that they could not remember the nature of marital relationship before the divorce.

Question 127: My <u>parents relationship through their marriage</u> was:			
	English(N=79)		Greek(N=90)
I can't remember	10	12.7%	28      31.1%

